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codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 6

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH AMERICA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

Eighth Session, Apia, Samoa, 19-22 October 2004

INFORMATION AND REPORTS ON FOOD CONTROL AND FOOD SAFETY ISSUES INCLUDING CODEX STANDARDS

Information submitted in reply to CL 2004/14-NASWP by: Australia, Canada, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga and United States of America

AUSTRALIA

(i) Official Agencies

Food safety issues are managed at the national level in Australia by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) and their associated agencies, namely the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS/DAFF) and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ/Health). The development and implementation of food safety policies and programs is undertaken by these agencies in close consultation with State and Territory Governments, who have constitutional responsibility for public health and safety within Australia.

There have been no major changes in structure or functions of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry since the last CCNASWP meeting held in 2002.

However, in 2003, the FSANZ Board commissioned an external review to assist in identifying what changes, if any, were necessary for it to fully implement the new food regulatory arrangements and to better align the organisation within the new food regulatory systems. The Strategic Review recommended that changes should be made to FSANZ's internal structure and operational arrangements. The key feature of the restructure is the separation of risk assessment from risk management and an enhancement of the role of the Chief Scientist.

Website links

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry www.daff.gov.au

Codex Australia www.codexaustralia.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing www.foodsecretariat.health.gov.au

Food Standards Australia New Zealand www.foodstandards.gov.au

Activities of the Codex Contact Point and National Codex Committee

Australia has implemented a communication strategy designed to increase the involvement of the processed food industry and to improve the information flow to and from the food industry, providing improved and more effective stakeholder involvement in the Codex process. As part of the strategy, the Codex Contact Point (Codex Australia) has developed a brochure written in "plain English" designed to get the message to industry of the importance of Codex standards in the global trading environment. Codex Australia's website has been completely redesigned along industry specific lines and allows subscription to an electronic E-Bulletin called "Setting the Standard. The web address is www.codexaustralia.gov.au.

In addition, we have also agreed to trial replacement of the National Codex Committee with a National Stakeholder Forum in an endeavour to increase stakeholder input to Australian positions. The first Forum will be held on 1 September 2004 and Australia will be in a position to report on the outcomes of the Forum to the meeting of NASWP in October.

(ii) Food Legislation

Food Regulatory System

A number of policy guidelines have been endorsed by the Australia New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council (Ministerial Council) over the past two years. The Ministerial Council is primarily responsible for the development of domestic food regulatory policy and the development of policy guidelines for setting domestic food standards. It has the capacity to request that these be reviewed. These policy guidelines have been referred to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to assist in the development of the standards.

The Ministerial Council has endorsed the following policy guidelines –

- Novel Foods – The Ministerial Council agreed to a policy guideline for FSANZ to review the current standard for novel foods in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and the associated user guide. The Ministerial Council has requested that the review of the standard have industry, government and consumer input.
- Country of Origin Labelling – The Ministerial Council agreed to a policy guideline in support of mandatory country of origin labelling of food. Ministers emphasised that this is not a public health and safety issue, as the safety of the food supply is assured through other means. The Council's support for country of origin labelling is on the grounds of enabling consumers to make informed choices.
- Food Safety Management in Australia: Food Safety Programs – This policy guideline has been endorsed by the Ministerial Council to improve food safety management in Australia and includes recommendations on which food business sectors should develop and implement mandatory food safety programs. Four industry sectors assessed as 'high risk' (foodservice to sensitive populations, catering to the general population, manufacture of uncooked comminuted fermented meats, and ready-to-eat oysters and other bivalves) will be subject to standard development under the FSANZ process.
- Caffeine in Foods – The Ministerial Council has agreed that, until further evidence becomes available, to maintain the status quo for caffeine regulation by: maintaining the current additive permissions for caffeine; and restricting the use of new products containing non-traditional caffeine rich ingredients (including guarana) to boost the caffeine content in other food, beyond the current provisions for caffeine. Caffeinated kola drinks and formulated caffeinated beverages will be permitted in accordance with the current standards.
- Nutrition, Health and Related Claims – The Ministerial Council agreed to a nutrition, health and related claims policy guideline which aims to ensure that the health and safety of the public is protected, whilst still allowing for food industry innovation and trade. It does this by incorporating a number of elements designed to ensure that claims made on foods or in advertising are true, scientifically substantiated and not misleading.

- Fortification of Foods with Vitamins and Minerals - The Ministerial Council agreed to a Policy Guideline for the Fortification of Foods with vitamins and minerals. The policy covers both mandatory and voluntary fortification of food. Ministers agreed that vitamins and minerals may be added to food where there is, for example, demonstrated evidence of a potential health benefit, and it is clear that the fortification of a food will not result in harm. Ministers also agreed consideration of mandatory fortification of food with iodine and folate should be a priority.
- Maximum Residue Levels - The Ministerial Council agreed to a process to harmonise the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) setting procedures of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority and FSANZ. The ultimate aim is to establish one set of published MRLs that regulate safe food and safe chemical use in agriculture. The agreed approach is based on the harmonisation of administrative processes, monitoring and review of the new harmonised assessment process and, subject to satisfaction with the new processes, the issuing of a single MRL. This approach applies to Australia only.
- Phase-out of Ethylene Oxide - In August 2003, it was reported to the Council that the phase-out of Ethylene Oxide (EtO) use in Australia for the treatment of herbs and spices is now complete. 100% of the Australian Food and Grocery Council's products (representing 99% of trade by volume sold in Australia) are no longer treated with EtO. This has been achieved through the use of steam sterilisation, batch selection and good manufacturing practice. Numerous mechanisms have been used to ensure that small producers and importers of herbs and spices, representing the remaining 1% of trade by volume sold in Australia, are also aware of their responsibilities relating to the phase-out of EtO.

The Joint Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

Major areas of new work have been in the area of Primary Production and Processing standards and the commencement of the development of standards in accordance with the policy guidelines received from Ministerial Council. Policy driven initiatives have included development work on issues such as; Nutrition Health and Related Claims, Fortification of Foods and Country of Origin Labelling.

Australia is working towards managing food safety from 'paddock to plate' by developing mandatory, nationally consistent food standards. FSANZ has embarked on a program of developing national Primary Production and Processing standards. These standards will complement other mandatory Food Safety standards that exist at the manufacturing, food service and retail sectors of the food supply chain.

Work has commenced on three proposals to mandate a compulsory HACCP-based food safety standard for food businesses in higher risk sectors. These standards focus on three vulnerable populations (i.e. hospitals, nursing homes, child care centres and the like), major caterers, and manufacturers of fermented meat. A similar requirement will be put in place for oyster production through the national seafood standard.

For both the Primary Production and Processing and Food Safety standards, a risk based approach is being taken whereby identified high risk commodities/activities will require documented food safety management systems such as HACCP and basic food safety requirements will apply for the lower risk sectors (e.g. measures to avoid contamination, temperature control, requirements for skills and knowledge, requirements for traceability etc).

The development of a standard for Nutrition, Health and Related Claims addresses nutrient content, nutrition function and risk reduction claims. A regulatory model is being considered that includes claim criteria underpinned by scientific substantiation.

Implementation of the policy direction on fortification of foods addresses both voluntary and mandatory fortification of food. The current focus is on the proposed mandatory addition of folic acid and iodine to the food supply to address public health concerns.

In addition to the above there has been growing interest in permissions for Novel Foods to enter the food supply. Examples of this include; Phytosterol esters as ingredients in breakfast cereal bars and in low fat milk and low fat yoghurt. In addition a review of 1.5.1 – Novel Foods has been initiated.

A review of kava has recently been undertaken which included consideration of recent cases of liver toxicity associated with the use of kava containing herbal preparations in capsule/tablet form presented as dietary supplements/complementary medicines. The review of kava recommends that Standard 2.6.3 – Kava be amended to include a revised definition of kava which excludes the use in food of kava extracts prepared by organic solvent extraction.

Ongoing interest in the development of standards relating to GM foods continues with approximately seven additional applications being undertaken or finalised in a range of commodities such as herbicide-tolerant corn, sugar beet, wheat and soy lines and an herbicide-tolerant, insect-protected corn line and two insect-protected cottons.

The current requirements for processing aids are also under review. These reviews are to consider incorporating processing aids used in New Zealand that may have been inadvertently omitted and to address anomalies and nomenclature rather than to incorporate new processing aids or alter the structure of Standard 1.3.3. A survey on the use of artificial sweeteners; (which generally indicates use levels below the ADI), with the exception of cyclamate, at the levels currently provided in Standard 1.3.1 – Food Additives, has also recently been completed.

(iii) Cooperation activities

FSANZ has delivered a range of training programs. Those attended by representatives from the Pacific include: a two-week course focusing on the risk assessment of chemical contaminants in food held in July 2002 in Hanoi, Vietnam; and a second two-week course on microbiological hazards in food was held from 27 October to 7 November 2003 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

FSANZ has developed an International Training Calendar 2004 –2005 to provide training opportunities for countries in both Asia and the Pacific Regions. This work is being undertaken in cooperation with APEC and through AusAID who provide the bulk of funding for these activities.

- In the past, the majority of courses have been held in Asia with representatives from Pacific countries invited to attend.
- In the future, most courses will be held in Australia. Pacific countries will be encouraged to participate.
- Consideration will be given to holding courses in Pacific countries if requested to do so and funds are available.

The calendar promotes the following training courses for regional economies subject to the availability of funding**.** The courses will be conducted in English and Pacific countries will be invited to participate.

Building an Effective More Food Regulatory System - Canberra

- This course is the first to be delivered under the FSANZ International Training Calendar.
- This one-week course delivered 9 –14 August.
- The course provides an overview of the Risk Analysis Framework with a specific focus on Risk Analysis. The program is based on a similar program delivered in China in May 2004.
- Representatives from the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji have attended.

Risk Assessment: Chemical - Canberra

- One- week course, 22- 26 November 2004.
- The course provides an overview of chemical risk assessment for scientific and technical officers working in food regulatory agencies.

Safety Assessment of Genetically Modified (GM) Foods - Canberra

- One week course, 11-15 April 2005
- Provides scientific and technical officers with the skills and knowledge required to conduct scientific risk assessments of GM food in line with WTO, TBT and SPS obligations.

Relationship between Food and Medicines - Canberra

- One week course scheduled for mid – late 2005
- Provides the opportunity to examine the interface between food and medicines including the regulation of functional foods.
- For scientific and technical officers working in food regulatory agencies.

CANADA

(i) Official Agencies

Canada Public Health Agency

In February 2004 the Government of Canada announced it would establish the Canada Public Health Agency, reporting to the Minister of Health. The federal public health agency will:

- be accountable to the Minister of Health who would retain ultimate responsibility for matters of public health within the Health Canada portfolio and be accountable to Parliament for what is done in and by the Agency; and
- have appropriate advisory structures to provide for ongoing and timely expert advice from the medical, health and scientific communities, from community and advocacy groups, and from other related sectors.

The agency's work will focus on the following priorities:

- support national readiness for public health threats, with particular emphasis on the adequacy of, and capacity to deploy, health professionals where and when they are needed in response to public health threats;
- promote excellence in the management of public health in Canada and throughout the world; and
- oversee federal efforts to:
  - strengthen national capacity to identify and reduce risks to public health; and
  - develop, implement and assess policies and programs that help enable Canadians to live a healthier life.

Further information on the Canada Public Health Agency can be found at:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/pha/index.html

Creation of Canada Border Services Agency

On December 12, 2003, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced the creation of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), which will be part of the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. The CBSA will bring together key border security and intelligence functions and will be an integral component in enhancing Canada's national security. The CBSA will build on the success of the Canada-United States Smart Border Declaration to ensure the twin goals of public safety and economic security. As in the Smart Border discussions, the CBSA will use the principles of risk management to expedite the flow of low-risk people and goods in order to better focus efforts on high-risk travelers and commercial traffic. To accomplish this, the CBSA will include customs officers, officials responsible for passenger and initial import inspection services for animals, plants and food, and immigration officers responsible for detention, removals, investigations, intelligence and immigration control functions overseas.

The CBSA combined resources from the former Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, as well as some resources from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

CFIA transferred approximately 90 FTEs consisting of the Food, Plant and Animal Inspection function, comprising inspectors and dog handlers operating in the travelers stream at major airports, who ensure compliance of non-commercial importations of food, plants and animals by travelers, as well as the marine targeting function. While CBSA will ensure presence at all border points for Canada, the CFIA will continue to set and manage the import policy for food, animals and plants.

(ii) Food Legislation

Smart Regulation

In the Speech from the Throne of September 2002, the Government of Canada made a commitment to move forward with a smart regulation strategy "to accelerate reforms in key areas to promote health and sustainability, to contribute to innovation and economic growth, and to reduce the administrative burden on business." In May 2003, an External Advisory Committee on Smart Regulation (EACSR) was established with a mandate to propose a regulatory strategy for Canada for the 21st century, which protects the health and safety of Canadians and of the environment, while contributing to innovation and competitiveness.

The EACSR has focussed its research and fact-finding efforts to develop discussion papers on six over-arching issues: International Cooperation; Federal-Provincial-Territorial Cooperation; Process Efficiency; Risk Management; Instruments for Government Action; and Defining the Public Interest. The discussion papers identify areas of inquiry for which input is requested from interested parties. The "Blueprint" report from the EACSR, describing the findings of the committee and proposing a path forward for Canada, is anticipated for the Fall 2004.

More details, including the discussion papers, can be found at:
http://www.smartregulation.gc.ca/en/index.asp

Health Canada Legislative Renewal

Health Canada is conducting a comprehensive review of its health protection legislation, which has, as its objective, to modernize and strengthen the legislation so as to better protect Canadians against health risks, and provide policy direction in the area of health protection. A new Canada Health Protection Act would replace the *Food and Drugs Act* (1953), the *Hazardous Products Act* (1969), the *Quarantine Act* (1872) and the *Radiation Emitting Devices Act* (1970).

In 1998, extensive consultations were held across Canada with health professionals, industry, advocacy groups and members of the Canadian public, to identify issues the new legislation should address. Based on what was heard, a detailed proposal was developed describing the scope, the intent and the areas/products that would be governed under the new Act.

Health Canada's Food Directorate and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are active participants in this initiative because the proposed new Act will contain provisions of interest to both organizations owing to their shared responsibility for food safety. For example, the proposal includes a new definition of food, approaches for categorizing products such as the creation of a classification committee, and suggestions to strengthen the deception provision.

A second round of consultations to seek views on the detailed proposal for a new Act began in Fall 2003 and concluded at the end of March 2004. The comments received are being analysed to contribute to policy development underlying the drafting of a legislative proposal early next year. Information on this legislative renewal initiative can be found at: http://renewal.hc-sc.gc.ca

Natural Health Products Regulations

Canada's *Natural Health Products Regulations* came into force on January 1, 2004 and include provisions on: definition of a natural health product (including, vitamins, minerals, herbal remedies and homeopathic medicines); product licensing; site licensing; good manufacturing practices; clinical trials; labelling and packaging requirements; and adverse reaction reporting.

A transition period for implementation of the *Regulations* is established in the *Natural Health Products Regulations*.

- As of January 1, 2004, all new natural health products (NHPs) (i.e., those not previously on the market) must comply with the *Regulations* and must be subject to the full licencing application process.
- There is a two year transition period for businesses involved in manufacturing, packaging, labelling or importing NHPs to comply with the site licencing requirements of the *Regulations*.
- There is a six year transition period for product licencing for NHPs that currently have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) issued under the Canadian *Food and Drug Regulations*.

- Over the first four years, compliance efforts will focus on NHPs currently on the market, but which do not have a DIN, according to risk-based product categories.

More detailed information on the *Natural Health Product Regulations* can be found at:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/nhpd-dpsn/index_e.html.

Enhanced Labelling Regulations for Allergens, Sulphites and Gluten in Food

The Canadian *Food and Drug Regulations* require that most prepackaged foods carry a label and that their ingredients appear on the labels in decreasing order of proportion. Nevertheless, certain ingredients and substances used in the manufacture of food products are exempted from declaration in the list of ingredients. For example, the ingredients and components of flavouring preparations need not be shown on the label.

Scientific evidence has shown that certain food ingredients or components of mixtures currently exempted from labelling declaration can cause life-threatening or severe adverse reactions in individuals with food sensitivities. As a result, Health Canada is developing regulatory amendments to the *Food and Drug Regulations* to enhance labelling requirements for a list of specified food allergens, sulphiting agents and gluten. The regulatory amendments under consideration would require that:

- peanuts, tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts (filberts), macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts (pignolias), pistachios, walnuts), sesame, milk, eggs, fish, crustaceans, shellfish, soy, grains containing gluten (wheat, including spelt and kamut, oats, barley, rye, triticale), or their derivatives and added sulphites (when present at a level of 10 ppm or more in the final food product) be shown in the list of ingredients by their common names, as if they were an ingredient of that food, if they are added to the food product as a component of an ingredient, preparation or mixture;
- the plant source be identified in the common name of all hydrolyzed plant proteins;
- the specific source of the plant be identified in the common name of all forms of starch or modified starch; and
- the source of lecithin be identified in the common name of lecithin.

Recently, the Food Directorate of Health Canada sent a notification to stakeholders outlining the detailed scope of these proposed amendments and the issues that these proposals were not intended to address, such as cross contamination. The Food Directorate is responding to the comments received from this letter and proceeding with development of the proposed amendments. It is anticipated that the proposed amendments will be published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part I in the Fall of 2004. The letter to stakeholders can be found at:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/food-aliment/friia-raaii/food_drugs-aliments_drogues/e_allergy_label_intro.html

Addition of Vitamins and Minerals to Foods

Health Canada's policy review on the addition of vitamins and minerals to food, which was initiated in January 1998, has been completed. Information on the proposed policy will be made available in the near future on Health Canada's website at:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/food-aliment/e_index.html>

Within the proposed policy, current policies on fortification to address public health concerns (through mandatory and discretionary fortification), and to maintain the nutritional quality of the food supply (through restoration of nutrient losses due to processing, and nutritional adequacy of substitute foods) will be maintained. In addition, a category of discretionary fortification is being considered. This would permit the optional addition of certain vitamins and minerals within defined ranges. The category of special purpose foods, particularly meal replacements and nutritional supplements, has been expanded.

In developing the policy and implementation plans, the Dietary Reference Intakes review process of the Institute of Medicine of the U.S. National Academies has been closely followed in both statistical modelling of the impact of various fortification scenarios and in setting out risk categories of the nutrients. The statistical modelling has assessed the safety of the final proposed levels of discretionary addition of nutrients within the risk categories. The advice of the Institute of Medicine committee on the application of the Dietary Reference Intakes to discretionary fortification was also taken with regard to the final proposed levels for discretionary fortification, i.e., levels equivalent to "good source" or "excellent source" claims.

Mandatory HACCP for Meat

The Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP) is the CFIA's approach to support and encourage the development, implementation, and maintenance of HACCP systems in all federally registered establishments of the meat, dairy, egg, honey, maple syrup, hatcheries and processed fruit and vegetable sectors as well as shell-egg grading stations.

As of May 2004, there are 747 establishments in Canada that are registered under the *Meat Inspection Act*. A total of 411 have been FSEP recognized to date and a further 214 establishments are in the process of recognition.

The consultation and communication strategy has been an on-going process since January 2001. A number of venues have been used to communicate, gather information and obtain feedback on the proposed initiative. These include a HACCP Readiness Survey, Industry Information Days, a consultation letter to all stakeholders, a mandatory FSEP web-site, FSEP Brochure, an internal FSEP newsletter and a series of Qs & As directed towards both staff and industry. Numerous consultative and information sessions have been held with various government and industry representatives. These include presentations to industry associations, CFIA senior management, CFIA staff and their respective unions.

The proposed regulations were published in *Canada Gazette*, Part I on August 23, 2003. Publication of *Canada Gazette* Part II is expected in the Fall of 2004. A "coming into force" provision within the regulations would allow for a phased implementation for 2005.

Post implementation evaluation would take place in the following year. Following the publication of the regulations, it is anticipated that the Mandatory FSEP Implementation Team will be re-organized to include expertise from other commodity programs in order to begin a consultative process towards the exploration of various options for implementing FSEP in the Dairy, Processed Eggs, Shell Eggs, Hatcheries, Honey, Maple and Processed Products commodities.

Toxic Substances Regulatory Framework

The CFIA is finalizing a regulatory framework under the *Health of Animals Act* which would further strengthen its regulatory control for instances of contamination along the entire food production continuum. If a contamination has occurred, federal regulations currently permit the CFIA to take action on inputs such as livestock feeds and veterinary biologics, and outputs such as meat, milk, eggs and other food commodities. The CFIA cannot currently take regulatory action in instances where animals on farm are suspected of being, or are known to have been, contaminated by toxic substances. A list of toxic substances is being proposed, which will include substances of concern such as veterinary drugs, pest control agents and environmental contaminants. It is anticipated that the framework will be published soon in *Canada Gazette*, Part 1 followed by a 2-3 month comment period.

Precautionary Framework

Following up on consultations with Canadians in 2001-2002, the Government of Canada has developed *A Framework for the Application of Precaution in Science-based Decision Making about Risk.* This Framework outlines guiding principles for the application of precaution to science-based decision making in areas of federal regulatory activity for the protection of health and safety and the environment, and the conservation of natural resources. This Framework serves to strengthen and describe existing Canadian practice. The purpose of the framework is:

- to improve the predictability, credibility and consistency of the federal government’s application of precaution to ensure adequate, reasonable and cost-effective decisions;
- to support sound federal government decision making while minimizing crises and controversies and capitalizing on opportunities;
- to increase public and stakeholder confidence, in Canada and abroad, that federal precautionary decision making is rigorous, sound and credible; and
- to increase Canada’s ability to positively influence international standards and the application of precaution.

Departmental and agency officials are expected to consider its guiding principles in decision making and to work together in developing guidance for the application of precaution in their particular area of responsibility in consultation with their stakeholders. The framework was released on July 25, 2003 and can be viewed at:

http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=publications&Sub=precaution&Doc=precaution_e.htm

Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response Protocol

The first edition of the *Foodborne Illness Outbreak Response Protocol* (FIORP) was developed in 1999 by Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in consultation with the provinces and territories. The FIORP provides general principles and operating procedures for coordination among federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) agencies during the investigation and control of foodborne illness outbreaks in Canada.

In May 2002, as part of a special session on Emergency Preparedness, the F/P/T Committee on Food Safety Policy (FPTCFSP) recognized the FIORP as a key procedural document in national emergency preparedness and agreed that there was a need to review it and seek endorsement by the FPT Deputy Ministers of Health and Agriculture. Cross country consultations were conducted during 2003 and a FPT Working Group is currently revising the document based on comments received during these consultations. The revised FIORP will describe roles and responsibilities, provide general operating procedures, establish clear lines of communication and provide guidance for post outbreak reviews.

The next step will be to seek support for the revised FIORP by the FPT Deputy Ministers of Health and Agriculture by Fall of 2004. The FPT Working Group will also develop recommendations for implementation, for consideration by the endorsing officials. Once the revised FIORP is endorsed, it will be posted on the Health Canada website at the following URL:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/food-aliment/friia-raaii/iap-pia/e_interagency_program.html

Good Importing Practices for Food (GIP)

Good Importing Practices For Food (GIP) is a voluntary guideline to help food importers in Canada control risks and meet regulatory requirements. The GIP, which is produced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), includes the key controls necessary for importers to control the safety, composition, quality, labelling and to prevent misrepresentation of imported foods. The GIP is generic in nature and, with the exception of meat or fish products that have their own regulatory requirements, can be applied to all food importers, regardless of the type of food commodity imported and the volume or frequency of imported shipments.

The GIP is based on the *Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene* adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

The GIP is considered to be the foundation for the development of a system for verifying food safety based on HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) principles. All Canadian importers are expected to develop and implement a HACCP-based Quality Management System. The CFIA, in turn, will use the GIP to assess importing practices and imported food commodities. Where applicable and appropriate, the CFIA will take enforcement action.

Fish Import Control System

CFIA is undertaking a review of the fish import program with the objective to evolve the import program from a lot compliance testing program to an import control system incorporating a risk analysis framework and requiring importers to develop and implement a quality management system to control their imports. CFIA efforts will shift from lot compliance testing to auditing and verifying the importer's quality management system.

Meat Inspection Reform Strategy

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is re-examining its approaches to meat inspection and the standards on which its inspection programs are based.

CFIA has developed, in the mid 1990s, the Modernized Poultry Inspection Program (MPIP), an inspection program founded on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis-Critical Control Point), which is contained within CFIA's FSEP (Food Safety Enhancement Program). CFIA is now proposing a similar approach to the red meat industry.

Since MPIP implementation, CFIA developed a Meat Inspection Reform Strategy to guide Meat Inspection Program and industry through a period of significant change to achieve the following objectives: to enhance the safety of meat and meat products; to increase the effectiveness of inspection programs; and to facilitate the allocation of staff on the basis of risk.

The key elements of the Reform Strategy are: the implementation of mandatory FSEP in registered meat establishments; the redesign of meat inspection program; and improved accountability by industry through monitoring, measuring and verification activities.

Canada Agriculture Policy Framework - Food Safety and Quality Program

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has embarked upon the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) - a federal, provincial, and territorial agreement - that sets out terms to work collaboratively in five key areas, of which one is Food Safety and Quality. Specifically, the Food Safety and Quality Chapter is committed to ensuring that food produced in Canada continues to be among the safest and highest-quality in the world. Consumers will benefit from a further reduction in the exposure to food-borne hazards thereby increasing their confidence in Canadian agriculture and agri-food products.

In December 2003, the Government of Canada announced $62 million through to 2008 for the new Canadian Food Safety and Quality Program (CFSQP), which is a voluntary, industry-led program to develop national food safety, food quality and traceability systems. The announcement *de facto* acknowledged that further funding initiatives under the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety program (COFFS) and the Canadian Food Safety Adaptation Program (CFSAP) were concluded. The CFSQP will build on the systems development work of these programs which used HACCP principles as a common approach. At the same time, it will broaden its scope to include food quality and traceability systems development. These measures will improve the food industry's ability to identify and respond to food safety issues and concerns, while improving market access and opportunities.

The CFIA is committed to enhancing food safety and quality through regulatory consistency within Canada and abroad, as well as strengthening food safety systems along the food continuum. By providing scientific and technical support to the CFSQP, the CFIA will contribute to the consistent application of HACCP principles and the development and implementation of HACCP systems throughout the food continuum.

Biotechnology Notices of Submission Project

The CFIA and Health Canada (HC) have launched a pilot project to post "notices of submission" that describe the product and a short summary of the data received in support of premarket notifications for food, premarket approvals for feeds and environmental release. This pilot project involves members of the industry association CropLife Canada, which represents approximately 85% of industry plant biotechnology developers in Canada. These companies have volunteered to write and submit the notices of submission as a means to demonstrate their support and understanding of the public desire for more transparency in the regulatory system.

CFIA and HC have undertaken this pilot project to give the public an opportunity to provide input on scientific matters relevant to the safety assessment of these submission, to increase transparency of the regulatory process and to increase confidence in the regulatory system with respect to plants with novel traits (PNTs), and novel feeds and novel foods derived from PNTs. To date two submission have been posted for public consultation and can be viewed at: http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/bio/subs/subliste.shtml

National Standard of Canada for the Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods That Are and Are Not Products of Genetic Engineering

On April 13, 2004, the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) announced the official adoption of the National Standard for the *Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods That Are and Are Not Products of Genetic Engineering* by the Standards Council of Canada. A National Standard is a consensus document prepared by an accredited standards-writing organization, such as the CGSB, and approved by the Standards Council of Canada, which fosters and promotes voluntary standardization as a means of advancing the national economy, assisting and protecting the consumer and facilitating domestic and international trade. CGSB is not a regulatory agency and standards published by the CGSB are voluntary. As such the Standard does not have the force of regulations and there is no provision for mandatory enforcement.

The label is based on a standard that has been in development for four years. For companies which choose to label or advertise their foods as to the GE content, the Standard defines what those labels may say, on what basis they may say it, how it may appear, and other aspects to ensure that the label is informative, understandable, verifiable, and not false or misleading. The Standard addresses positive and negative claims for single and multi-ingredient foods. The National Standard for the *Voluntary Labelling and Advertising of Foods That Are and Are Not Products of Genetic Engineering* is available over the Internet at Canadian General Standards Board Web site located at http://www.pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/032_025/standard-e.html

Royal Society of Canada Report on the Regulation of Food Biotechnology in Canada

The Report of the Expert Panel entitled "*Elements of Precaution: Recommendations for the Regulation of Food Biotechnology in Canada*", commissioned by the Royal Society of Canada at the request of the government, was released in February 2001 (www.rsc.ca). The independent expert panel was asked to examine future scientific developments in food biotechnology and advise on the science capacity required to continue to ensure the safety of new food products being developed through biotechnology into the 21st century. The sixth progress report on the Action Plan of the Government of Canada developed in response to the Royal Society of Canada's Expert Panel's recommendations was published in August 2004 (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/protection/novel_foods.html).

(iii) Cooperation Activities

The CFIA is actively involved in cooperation initiatives with other countries by: providing technical assistance; providing training on food inspection procedures; holding aquaculture working group meetings; and hosting visitors regarding the CFIA Food Safety Enhancement Program. Countries which have recently benefited from the Agency's expertise include Chile, Kenya, China, France, Korea, Honduras, United Kingdom, and Belize.

Health Canada officials have presented workshops on the safety assessment of genetically modified foods to over 20 countries since 1999. Many of these have been conducted in collaboration with regulatory authorities in Australia, the United States and international organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI).

FIJI

A. Official Agencies responsible for food legislation and food control:

1. Attorney General's Office - [a/Senior Legal Officer - Iliesa Tuiloma]
2. Ministry of Health - [Chief Health Inspector - Waisale Delai
3. Department of Quarantine - [a/Director Quarantine - Hiagi Foraete]
4. Department of Animal Health and Production - [Director - Dr. Joeli Vakabua]
5. Ministry of Agriculture - [PEPO (Fiji AgTrade) - Waisiki Gonemaituba]

B. Food Legislation:

Fiji is currently updating all her relevant food legislations through ad-hoc working groups at national Level. Regional harmonization will follow suit.

C. Cooperation activities:

Under FAO TCP/RAS/2905, "Capacity Building in Codex …" three workshops have been organised and attended for by our delegate.

Workshop #1 - Training Course on Food Regulation and Standards
- Food Control and Quality Assurance.

Workshop #2 - Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification.

Workshok #3 - Training Course on the Management of Codex Contact Point, and National Codex Systems.

Another project funded by FAO and includes countries of the South Pacific is Strengthening of Analytical Capabilities of Food Labs in the South Pacific. Under this project 3 training workshops had been done and was run by the University of the South Pacific in Fiji.

NEW ZEALAND

Official Agencies

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority, established on 1 July 2002 as a semi autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, is now in its third year of operation as a separate entity. The Authority brought together the food regulatory functions of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority is responsible for the following functions:

- Administer food safety in the production, processing, distribution, preparation and retail sale and export of food;
- Ensure a coherent and seamless food regulatory regime across the entire food chain for both safety and suitability;
- Manage the joint food standards setting arrangements with Australia and ensure New Zealand interests are protected;
- Ensure a whole of government approach to food related advice;
- Negotiate and provide official assurances to overseas governments for food and food related products; and
- Protect consumers from risks that may arise in connection with the consumption of food and otherwise protect the interests of consumers in relation to food through effective enforcement and monitoring.

The Authority is accountable to the Minister for Food Safety. The Government has also established a Food Safety Advisory Board to provide independent advice to the Minister on domestic food safety issues and NZFSA has established an Officials Committee on Food Safety that has senior level representation from a range of relevant government agencies to provide the ‘whole of government’ approach to food related policy advice.

Food Legislation: Domestic legislative changes in New Zealand

New Zealand food legislation is subject to a programme of review and amendment to ensure a risk based approach is consistently applied across the regulatory regime and that there is broad coverage throughout the food chain. Currently legislation covers animal products, dairy, food processing and retail sale, wine production and sale and agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines. Areas currently under review include the *Dairy Industry Act 1952* (intended to be covered in future by the *Animal Products Act 1999*), the scope and application of the *Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997,* and the domestic regulatory environment. Of future interest will be in the more generic plant production area. Changes that have been given effect to date include the following.

Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997

The *Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997* (ACVM Act) commenced on 2 July 2001. Its purpose is to manage or prevent risks from agricultural compounds to trade in primary produce, animal welfare and agricultural security, and to ensure the use of such compounds does not result in breaches to domestic food residue standards. It does not cover risks to human health or the environment, which are covered by the New Zealand Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act).

The ACVM Act is primarily responsive to standards and outcomes set under food, biosecurity and animal welfare legislation. Agricultural compounds are assessed and controlled under the ACVM Act to ensure that the standards and outcomes set under other legislation or by international agreements are not compromised.

On 1 July 2002 all existing animal remedy licences and pesticide registrations under earlier, superseded legislation were converted to registrations under the ACVM Act. On 2 July 2004 all persons holding such registrations had to update the information held by NZFSA on each of their products. This bought to an end to the last of the transitional provisions from the earlier legislation.

Wine Act 2003

The *Wine Act 2003* came into force on 1 January 2004. The Wine Act replaced and updated the legislative base for the wine industry, introducing a risk based approach, consolidating various aspects of Government's involvement in the industry and providing a strong legislative for the export of New Zealand wine. It is designed to provide a single, integrated compliance regime for wine that covers safety and suitability requirements (e.g. labelling) and export requirements. It also introduces cost recovery to the wine industry and changes the basis for the funding of industry-good activities.

The transitional provisions of the Wine Act require wine makers to have a registered risk based management plan (a wine standards management plan) by 1 January 2007. The regulatory structure must therefore be in place to allow sufficient time for the development of these plans.

Joint Food Standards setting system with Australia

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code came fully into force in both Australia and New Zealand on 20 December 2002. Parts 1 and 2 of the Code covering mainly labelling and composition, have joint application in both Australia and New Zealand while Parts 3 and 4 covering food safety and hygiene and food production apply in Australia only. Amendment, addition and review continue to refine and enhance the Code. Areas of current interest include fortification and health claims

The Codex Committees on Meat Hygiene (CCMH) and Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP)

As host country for the Codex Committees on Meat Hygiene and Milk and Milk Products New chairs the work of these two committees. The 10th session of CCMH was held in Auckland, New Zealand in February 2004.The CCMH is currently involved in the development of a Code of Practice of Hygienic Practice for Meat which is at step 6 of the Codex Procedure. The 11th session of CCMH is scheduled to be held in New Zealand in February 2005.

New Zealand also chairs the CCMMP which is currently involved in the revision of various individual cheese standards. The next session of CCMMP is scheduled to be held in New Zealand in the first half of 2006.

MAJOR NEW ZEALAND REVIEWS UNDERWAY OR COMPLETED

Domestic Food Review

A review of domestic food regulation in New Zealand is underway to set in place a New Zealand regulatory programme applicable across the board that will deliver on and promote safe and suitable food. The scope of the review extends to cover Government involvement in all food safety and suitability aspects of food produced, processed, manufactured, transported, traded or imported in New Zealand.

It is the first major review in 25 years of food controls in New Zealand designed to protect New Zealand consumers and is an excellent opportunity for us to simplify processes and improve systems to ensure consumers get a good deal in terms of buying safe food with minimal costs added into the price.

The key objectives of the review are to provide a coherent and seamless food regulatory regime across the farm to plate continuum, the protection of public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food and to ensure that all food for sale in New Zealand meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene. Further objectives are to protect consumers through effective enforcement and monitoring and to support customer choice through promoting accurate and meaningful labelling.

Imported Food Review

The NZFSA is undertaking a review of the arrangements that control those imports that are covered by legislation administered by the NZFSA. This includes:

- Imported food and ingredients;
- Food-related products (e.g. tableware);
- Agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines;
- Stock feed and pet food.

The overall project is made up of several sub-projects, each dealing with specific parts of the imports puzzle. The related projects that come under the scope of the main programme include:

- A Strategic Review of Arrangements Controlling the Importation of Food & Food-related Products into New Zealand.
- Trans-Tasman Imports Inspection Review
- Imports Food Risk Profiling
- BSE Categorisation Process Review

A discussion document was released was for consultation in August.

GM Foods Compliance

NZFSA undertook a compliance survey of GM food labelling against the relevant standard in the joint Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. The relevant standard in the Code requires that foods containing approved genetically modified ingredients be adequately labelled. All genetically modified foods or ingredients are subject to a pre-market safety assessment and must be approved before being permitted for use in New Zealand.

The April 2002 – June 2003 audit of manufacturers and importers revealed that there was a high level of familiarity and compliance with the GM labelling standard and that there was no genetically modified food or ingredient in New Zealand that had not been assessed as safe and approved.

New Zealand Total Diet Survey

NZFSA is currently undertaking the 2003/04 New Zealand Total Diet Survey (NZTDS). The Total Diet Survey is carried out every five to six years. It assesses the health implications of, and estimates the potential dietary exposure to, selected pesticides, contaminants and nutrient elements in the New Zealand food supply.

The foods sampled were 110 commonly eaten foods, three foods that are considered high risk (lambs liver, mussels and oysters), and eight foods consumed specifically by children or infants. Sampling was undertaken over 4 quarters. Three of the four quarters of the food sampling and analysis component of the NZTDS have been completed and the analytical reports released for public information. The fourth quarter is nearing completion and the report is expected to be released in October 2004.

To date only two significant issues have been identified.

- In the second quarter, a soy milk was found to have very high levels of iodine, and the manufacturer agreed to stop production and reformulate the product. As retail stocks were near the end of their cycle a recall was not undertaken. Four cases of thyroiditis were identified in the lower South Island. In each case the person had been consuming the soy milk product identified, but to date NZFSA has not received information on the conclusion of the investigation.
- An early report of a result from the fourth quarter identified a high lead level in an infant food and the product was recalled. Investigation identified cornflour as the cause and subsequently a number of related products were recalled.

Fortification

Currently in New Zealand there are a number of food products that are fortified on a voluntary basis. The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code permits the voluntary addition of limited levels of some vitamins and minerals into certain foods. Such provisions have been a feature of regulation since the mid 1990s and foods such as breads, cereals, pastas and some milk products are permitted to be fortified with vitamins and minerals.

The need to review fortification has become apparent with the increasing interest both from the point of view of decreasing current nutrient deficiencies, as well as preventing possible deficiencies.

New Zealand and Australia completed the development of a policy framework for fortification of the food supply in May 2004 covering principles for both mandatory and voluntary fortification. In New Zealand there is a particular focus on the addition of folic acid for the prevention of neural tube defects, and the addition of iodine to the food supply to help in the prevention of a recently identified deficiency. The NZFSA is identifying options to increase consumption of these nutrients, which is canvassing the prospect of mandatory addition of each nutrient to specific food stuffs.

Traceability

Against the background of recent international debates on the application of traceability in food, the NZFSA has been leading the development of a policy framework document setting out the New Zealand position on traceability particularly as it relates to food. It is expected that this document will contribute to the development of an overall policy framework on the application of traceability in food and agriculture.

E-Cert

New Zealand has been at the forefront of development of Electronic certification systems in international food trade. Greater acceptance and use of such systems will be important to promoting greater efficiency in documentation and certification processes and facilitating smooth conduct of international trade. New Zealand is actively working with a number of countries to implement E-Cert systems for bilateral trade.

New Zealand supports the proposed development by CCFICS of a set of principles relating to Electronic Certification and will be participating in the CCFICS Working Group on this subject.

An important issue for discussion is how countries can work more effectively together in the management of SPS data and systems. The World Customs Organization has a significant international advantage because it has been an early adopter of electronics with its focus on how the electronic medium can improve its business. There needs to be discussion in the SPS arena on whether or not and how it can capitalise on becoming more electronic.

Food Safety Outcomes

NZFSA is strongly committed to implementing "outcome-based" food safety standards where there is sufficient scientific knowledge to do so. For food in trade, this reflects international obligations under the WTO SPS Agreement as well as the risk analysis work currently underway in Codex. Establishment of measurable regulatory "targets" that provide flexibility to industry in the way they are achieved requires a considerable investment in risk assessment at the national level.

NZFSA currently has risk assessment work underway in the following areas: Salmonella Brandenburg in sheep meat, import and domestic pathway analysis for food-borne salmonellosis, pasteurized milk products compared with non-pasteurised milk products, E. coli O157:H7 in all foods and Campylobacter in all foods. In addition, NZFSA is developing a generic legislative model for regulation of all foods that is based on food safety "targets" (performance objectives) to the greatest extent practicable.

SAMOA

(i) OFFICIAL AGENCIES MINISTRIES & ORGANISATIONS	(ii) FOOD LEGISLATION	(iii) COOPERATION ACTIVITIES
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology	*Fisheries Act* 1988 & subsequent Amendments • Provide legislative framework for licensing & fees authorized persons, certification & establishment of Samoa Seafood Standards Council (SSSC)	
	Fish Processing and Export Regulation 2002 • Covers details on the licensing of fish processing establishment including obligations of operators, certification of seafood products for export, standards and operational requirements that apply to fish processing establishment	
	Industry Approved Standards (Fisheries) 2002 • Covers the composition, TOR, authority and overarching principles of the SSSC, covers the processing, trading and marketing of fish and fish products for export, document control, export requirements, design, operational & instruction requirements	
	Quarantine Bio-Security Bill 2004	
Ministry of Health	*Food and Drugs Act* 1967 (currently under review) • Contains provisions to make regulations to prescribe standards of strength, weight, quality, purity, quantity or composition in respect of any food • Contains requirements for hygienic in building structures such as ventilation, sanitary facilities etc; • Cease and condemn food unfit for human consumption	
	Health Ordinance 1959 • The power to enter and inspect food facilities in terms of contamination • Laboratory for microbiological testing of food	
Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour	*Fair Trading Act* 1998 • Objective is to protect the rights of consumers and establish certain standards of conduct by those engaged in the production, sale and distribution of goods and services to consumers	
Samoa Water Authority	*Samoa Drinking Water Manual* 1998 • Laboratory for microbiological testing	

The above table specifies the current legislation related to food control services in Samoa.

TONGA

(i) Official Agencies

As in many countries, the responsibilities for food control and regulation in Tonga are dispersed among a number of government agencies. Tonga does not have a coherent food control system and food control legislation and standards are virtually non existent[1].

In October 2002, His Majesty King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV accorded high priority to the assurance of consumer safety, fair-trading in food and the development of the food industries in Tonga by the appointment of a separate Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries with a new portfolio for Food under the same Minister.

In its efforts to address the increasing global concerns on consumer safety, the Tongan Government established a new Food Division in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food (MAFF) with a view to centralize all activities in food including food safety activities. Whilst the new Food Division of MAFF is in the process in planning its future activities, the responsibilities for food control and regulations are still with the original government line ministries, until a food safety legislation is enacted, as follows:

i. Under the Public Health Act, the Ministry of Health has the responsibility to register and inspect all food products, including agricultural, fisheries, imported and export products, and food processing premises for domestic and export operations. The Ministry of Health also has the authority under the said Act to set regulations and standards for both imported and exported food products.

ii. Under the Licencsing Act and Consumer Act, the Ministry of Labour, Commerce & Industries has the responsibility to license all food premises and has the authority to set standards to ensure consumer safety and fair practices in all consumer goods including food products.

iii. Under the Plant Quarantine Act and Animal Diseases Act, the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry has the responsibility to inspect all imported and exported food products of plant and animal origin for biosafety purposes to ensure plant and animal protection. Under the Fruit Export Act, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry also has the responsibility to inspect all agricultural processing premises for export and of setting regulations and quality standards of fruits for export.

iv. Under the Fisheries Management Act, the Ministry of Fisheries has the responsibility to register and inspect all fisheries processing premises and fishery products for export. The Ministry also has the authority under the said Act to set standards for all fishery products for export.

The activities of the Codex Contact Point include:

- receiving all Codex documents and distribution of relevant Codex document that are on interest to Tonga to the NCAC members and interested parties.
- storing all Codex documentations;
- assist the NCAC in convening of public consultations on Codex issues for preparation on a country position.

The activities of the NCAC implemented in 2004 were:

1. Since its establishment in June 1999, the NCAC has met 6 times to date, 2 meetings in 1999 – 2003 and 4 meetings in 2004

[1] International Consultancy on Food Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Tonga, May 2003, S. Rajeskar, FAO report.

2. Convening of a *"National Expert Consultation on Food Safety in Tonga"* in March 2004 with the assistance of WHO and FAO. The objectives of the consultation were to draft (1) a recommended National Food Control & Quality Assurance System for Tonga; and (2) a National Plan of Action for the Establishment of the System in Tonga in consultation with the food industries and consumers.

3. Considering the proposed FSANZ draft Kava and Cassava Standards in Feb/Mar for preparation of comments in response to an invitation from FSANZ.

4. Convening a public consultation in September to consider Codex work of interest to Tonga to assist in the preparation of a country position.

(ii) Food Legislation

As mentioned above, Tonga currently lacks a food legislation. It is anticipated that a food legislation and regulations will be drafted for enactment and standards in accordance with Codex standard adopted by 2006/07. A project proposal has been requested to FAO for assistance in this area.

(iii) Cooperation activities

a) Through the FAO Sub-regional project on Capacity Building on Codex, Food Regulation and International Food Standards Harmonization, a serious of training courses for the sub-region was held commencing in November 2003 with a view to train government officials in the sub-region on improve their knowledge and skills in Codex work and harmonization of food regulations, standards and import/export inspection services.

b) Tonga receives regular invitations from the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) for comments on their reviews and proposals on existing and/or new food standards.

UNITED STATES

(i) Official Agencies

In the United States, many federal, state, and local agencies work together to monitor food safety. A few of these agencies are listed below (The organization and structure for the agencies listed, as well as more information, can be found on the indicated internet sites).

Food and Drug Administration, DHHS - Enforces food safety laws governing domestic and imported food, except meat and poultry. www.cfsan.fda.gov/list.html www.fda.gov/cvm/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DHHS - Investigates with local, state and other federal officials sources of food-borne disease outbreaks and maintains a nationwide system of food-borne disease surveillance. www.cdc.gov

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA - Enforces food safety laws governing domestic and imported meat and poultry products and processed egg products (generally liquid, frozen and dried pasteurized egg products). www.fsis.usda.gov

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA - with U.S. colleges and universities, develops research and education programs on food safety for farmers and consumers. www.reeusda.gov

National Agricultural Library, USDA/FDA Foodborne Illness Education Information Center - Maintains a database of computer software, audiovisuals, posters, games, teachers' guides and other educational materials on preventing food-borne illness and helps educators, food service trainers and consumers locate educational materials on preventing food-borne illness**.** www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Determines safety of new pesticides, sets tolerance levels for pesticide residues in foods, and publishes directions on safe use of pesticides. www.epa.gov

U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Through its fee-for-service Seafood Inspection Program, inspects and certifies fishing vessels, seafood processing plants, and retail facilities for federal sanitation standards. seafood.nmfs.gov

U.S. Department of the Treasury, Alcohol, Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau - Enforces food safety laws governing production and distribution of alcoholic beverages and investigates cases of adulterated alcoholic. www.ttb.gov

U.S. Customs Service Works with federal regulatory agencies to ensure that all goods entering and exiting the United States do so according to U.S. laws and regulations. www.customs.ustreas.gov

U.S. Department of Justice - Prosecutes companies and individuals suspected of violating food safety laws and through U.S. Marshals Service, seizes unsafe food products not yet in the marketplace, as ordered by courts. www.usdoj.gov

Federal Trade Commission - Enforces a variety of laws that protect consumers from unfair, deceptive or fraudulent practices, including deceptive and unsubstantiated advertising. www.ftc.gov

State and Local Governments - Work with FDA and other federal agencies to implement food safety standards for fish, seafood, milk, and other foods produced within state borders; inspect restaurants, grocery stores, and other retail food establishments, as well as dairy farms and milk processing plants, grain mills, and food manufacturing plants within local jurisdictions, and embargo (stop the sale of) unsafe food products made or distributed within state borders

(ii) Food Legislation

USDA and HHS Strengthen Safeguards against Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Following detection of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in an imported dairy cow in Washington State in December 2003, the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services announced a series of regulatory actions and

policy changes to strengthen protections against the spread of BSE in U.S. cattle and against human exposure to the BSE agent. The Secretary of Agriculture also convened an international panel of experts on BSE to review the U.S. response to the Washington case and make recommendations that could provide meaningful additional public or animal health benefits. FSIS, in a series of three interim final rules that were published and made effective on January 12, 2004, took additional measures to prevent the BSE agent from entering the human food supply.

On July 9, 2004 the Secretaries of HHS and USDA announced three actions being taken to further strengthen existing safeguards that protect consumers against the agent that causes BSE:

- A joint USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS), USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) notice that asks for public comment on additional preventive actions that are being considered concerning BSE;
- An interim final FDA rule that prohibits the use of certain cattle-derived materials in human food (including dietary supplements) and cosmetics; and
- A proposed FDA rule on recordkeeping requirements for the interim final rule relating to this ban.

The joint FSIS/FDA/APHIS notice provides a succinct report on the work of the international review team (IRT) convened by Secretary Veneman to review the U.S. response to the single case of BSE in the United States, along with a summary of actions already taken by each agency on BSE.

USDA's FSIS continues to seek and address comments on actions taken in relation to the BSE mitigation measures and put in place in January 2004. FSIS also specifically is seeking comments on whether a country's BSE status should be taken into account when determining whether a country's meat inspection system is equivalent to the U.S. regulations including the provisions in the FSIS interim final rules.

USDA's APHIS is specifically seeking comments on the implementation of a national animal identification system. In April, USDA announced the availability of $18 million in Commodity Credit Corporation funding to expedite development of a national animal identification system, which is currently underway. APHIS is inviting comments on when and under what circumstances the program should move from voluntary to mandatory, and which species should be covered now and over the long term.

The ANPRM also requests comment on the following measures related to animal feed, which is regulated by FDA:

removing specified risk materials (SRM's) from all animal feed, including pet food, to control the risks of cross contamination throughout feed manufacture and distribution and on the farm due to misfeeding;

- requiring dedicated equipment or facilities for handling and storing feed and ingredients during manufacturing and transportation, to prevent cross contamination;

- prohibiting the use of all mammalian and poultry protein in ruminant feed, to prevent cross contamination; and prohibiting materials from non-ambulatory disabled cattle and dead stock from use in all animal feed.

FDA has reached a preliminary conclusion that it should propose to remove SRM's from all animal feed and is currently working on a proposal to accomplish this goal.

FDA also issued an interim final rule that prohibits the use of cattle-derived materials that can carry the BSE-infectious agent in human foods, including certain meat-based products and dietary supplements, and in cosmetics. These high-risk cattle-derived materials include SRM's that are known to harbor concentrations of the infectious agent for BSE, such as the brain, skull, eyes, and spinal cord of cattle 30 months of age or older, and a portion of the small intestine and tonsils from all cattle, regardless of their age. Prohibited high-risk bovine materials also include material from non-ambulatory disabled cattle, the small intestine of all cattle, material from cattle not inspected and passed for human consumption, and mechanically separated beef.

This action is consistent with the recent interim final rule issued by USDA declaring these materials to be inedible (unfit for human food) and prohibiting their use as human food.

FDA's interim final rule, in conjunction with interim final rules issued by FSIS in January 2004, will minimize human exposure to materials that scientific studies have demonstrated are likely to contain the BSE agent when derived from cattle that are infected with the disease. Consumption of products contaminated with the agent that causes BSE is the likely cause of a similar disease in people called variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

In conjunction with the publication of the interim final rule, FDA is also proposing to require that manufacturers and processors of FDA-regulated human food and cosmetics containing cattle-derived material maintain records showing that prohibited materials are not used in their products. FDA is taking this action because records documenting the absence of such materials are important to ensure compliance with requirements of the interim final rule.

FSIS: "Ensuring Public Health: a Vision for the Future" and "Fulfilling the Vision: Initiatives in Protecting Public Health"

In 2002, USDA's Office of Food Safety established five core goals to improve food safety for American families:

- To improve the management and effectiveness of our regulatory programs,

- To ensure that policy decisions are based on science,

- To improve coordination of food safety activities with other public health agencies,

- To enhance public education, and

- To protect FSIS regulated products from intentional contamination.

Last year, FSIS outlined specific initiatives to fulfill these goals and thereby improving health outcomes for Americans. These initiatives were reported in FSIS' food safety vision document, *Ensuring Public Health: a Vision for the Future*. As part of FSIS' continuing process to evolve, *Fulfilling the Vision* was prepared as a detailed plan to best utilize Agency resources and authorities to further enhance food protection systems during the coming year. In *Fulfilling the Vision*, FSIS presents a list of accomplishments achieved over the past year that have enhanced the safety of the U.S. food supply.

Significant Food Safety Advancements

Significant food safety advancements have been made in the past year. One of these has been improvements in implementation and verification of plant Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans, leading to a dramatic decline in the number of meat and poultry product recalls during 2003. The number of Class I, or high risk, recalls in 2003 has nearly been cut in half from the total observed in 2002. In the first half of 2004, the number of Class I recalls has decreased even further. Other indicators of success this past year include a trend of reduction in pathogens found in meat and poultry regulatory samples. In late 2003, FSIS released data that showed, as of September 30th, a 25-percent drop in the percentage of positive *Listeria monocytogenes* regulatory samples from the year before, and a 70-percent decline compared with years prior to the implementation of HACCP. More importantly, in its annual (2004) report on the incidence of infections from foodborne illness by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted significant declines from 1996 to 2003 in illnesses caused by *E. coli* O157:H7 (42%), *Salmonella* (17%), *Campylobacter* (28%), and *Yersinia* (49%). Illnesses caused by *Salmonella* Typhimurium (typically associated with meat and poultry) decreased by 38%. Between 2002 and 2003, illnesses caused by *E. coli* O157:H7, typically associated with ground beef, dropped by 36%. CDC attributes the changes in the incidence of these infections to control measures implemented by government agencies and the food industry, and enhanced food safety education efforts. Specifically with regard to E. coli O157:H7, CDC attributes the reduction in illness caused by this pathogen to policies implemented in 2002 and 2003 by FSIS.

Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004

President George W. Bush signed the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (S. 741) into law on August 3, 2004. The Act, among other things would require:

- Food ingredient statements to identify in common language that an ingredient is itself, or is derived from, one of the eight main food allergens (peanuts, tree nuts, fish, crustacean, eggs, milk, soy and wheat, or is gluten (from rye, barley, oats and triticale);
- Food ingredient labels to appear in a print, type and format that is easier to read than current label print requirements;
- Food ingredient statements to identify food allergens used in spices, natural or artificial flavorings, additives and colorings;
- The use of “may contain” or other language when steps to reduce cross-contamination will not eliminate the possibility of cross-contact;
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control to track food allergy-related deaths.

Modernization of Food Good Manufacturing Practices

The U.S. FDA has announced plans to modernize its food Good Manufacturing Practices, last revised in 1986. In order to evaluate its current food GMPs, the FDA established an internal Food GMP Modernization Working Group in July 2002. The Working Group initiated further research in two areas: (1) the impact of the food GMPs on food safety and (2) the impact of revised regulations on food safety and the likely economic consequences of such revisions. The research effort includes several components, including, among other things, a literature review, and soliciting of expert opinions. The agency plans to hold three public meetings to receive data, information, and other input on food GMP modernization from stakeholders. To help focus the public meeting comments, a FR notice will include a list of specific questions about food GMP modernization that FDA would like participants to address. The FDA will evaluate the data and information received to determine how to revise the food GMP regulations. FDA plans to publish a white paper with a summary of its findings in September. FDA will then proceed through (notice-and-comment) rulemaking, as appropriate.

Labeling and Manufacturing Standards for All Dietary Supplements

On March 7, 2003, the U.S. FDA proposed rules relating to the labeling and manufacturing of dietary supplements. The proposed rule would require current good manufacturing practices (CGMPs) in their manufacturing, packing, and holding of dietary supplements. This proposed rule includes requirements for designing and constructing physical plants, establishing quality control procedures, and testing manufactured dietary ingredients and dietary supplements. It also includes proposed requirements for maintaining records and for handling consumer complaints related to CGMPs. The proposed rule would also establish standards to ensure that dietary supplements and dietary ingredients are not adulterated with contaminants or impurities, and are labeled to accurately to reflect the active ingredients and other ingredients in the product.

This proposed regulation follows FDA's consumer initiative announced in December 2002 intended to improve policies on providing information about health consequences of food and dietary supplements and to increase enforcement efforts to prevent misleading health claims made by certain dietary supplement manufacturers. By putting in place requirements that will ensure universal good manufacturing practices, the proposed regulation should serve to eliminate the guesswork for consumers about which dietary supplements may or may not be of high quality. In turn, manufacturers of dietary supplements will have to compete based on the quantity of their product, not through potentially misleading labels or inexpensive but less safe manufacturing processes.

(iii) Cooperation activities

In addition to hundreds of cooperative activities related to food safety carried out by a number of agencies throughout the U.S. Government, the U.S. Codex Office has, since the previous session of CCNASWP, conducted the following cooperative efforts related specifically to enhancing developing country participation in Codex:

Strategic Planning Workshop for CCLAC

San Jose, Costa Rica, November 4 – 5, 2002

Target audience was all countries in the CCLAC Region. Approximately 30 representatives from 18 countries participated.

Objective was to revise a draft strategic plan for CCLAC.

Codex Workshop

New Delhi, India, January 14 – 16, 2003

Target audience was Indian government officials. Approximately 60 Indian policymakers and approximately 100 Indian industry representatives attended.

Objective was to promote a better understanding of the issues being raised in Codex and to build strategic alliances with a leading voice for developing countries in Codex.

Codex Technical Seminar

Cairo, Egypt, June 4-6, 2003

Target audience was Egyptian officials. Approximately 200 Egyptian policymakers and industry representatives attended.

Objective was to provide an introduction to Codex and its role in international food trade.

Side Event at Codex Alimentarius Commission

Rome, Italy, June 28, 2003

Target audience was government delegates from Latin America and Africa. Representatives from 28 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean as well as 5 African countries attended.

The Objective was to discuss important issues related to the upcoming Codex Alimentarious Commission meetings, June 30-July 7.

Meetings or Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods

San Salvador, El Salvador, July 21-23, 2003

Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 11-17, 2003

Target audience was scientists and policy makers in Central and South America. Representatives from 21 Latin American countries participated.

Objective was to enhance the participation and effectiveness of Latin American countries in the Codex Committee on Residue of Veterinary Drugs in Foods.

Codex Technical Seminar – Southern Africa

Johannesburg, South Africa, August 27-29, 2003

Target audience was countries from the South African region. Policymakers from 16 nations of the region attended.

The objective was to address food safety guidelines and avoidance of potential barriers to sanitary-phytosanitary protocols.

Codex Discussions with CCLAC Leadership

Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 1 – 3, 2004

Target audience was CCLAC leaders. Representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay joined the discussions.

The objective was to foster closer cooperation between North America and CCLAC.

Technical Discussions on Animal Feeding

Brasilia, Brazil, April 22 – 23, 2004

Target audience was government and industry officials from Brazil.

The objective was to discuss issues related to the Code of Practice for Good Animal Feeding.

Codex Technical Seminar Prior to CCMMP

Auckland, New Zealand, April 24, 2004

Target audience was developing countries. Delegates from 16 Latin America, Africa, and Pacific Island countries attended the seminar.

The objective was to present information about geographical indications and their relevance to a proposed draft standard for Parmesan cheeses.

Codex Technical Seminar Prior to CCFL

Montréal, Canada, May 9, 2004

Target audience was Latin America countries. Delegates from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay attended the Seminar.

The objective was to facilitate an exchange of views on labeling issues coming before the Food Labeling Committee.

Technical Workshop and "Traceability / Product Tracing" Seminar for CCLAC countries

Mexico City, Mexico, May 25-28, 2004

Target audience was Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean Region. Representatives from 22 countries participated.

The objective of the workshop was to discuss national Codex organization issues and Codex issues related to trade. The workshop, jointly with Australia, focused on the definition and principles for application of "traceability/product tracing".

Outreach Seminars prior to CAC

Brussels, Belgium, June 10, 2004

Geneva, Switzerland, June 16, 2004

Target audience was developing countries with missions to the EU in Brussels and to the WTO in Geneva. Fourteen countries attended in Brussels. Twenty-two countries including the QUAD countries attended the seminar in Geneva.

The objective was to present a list of important issues coming before the 27th Session of the Codex Alimentarious Commission.

African Strategic Plan Seminar Prior to CAC

Geneva, Switzerland, June 27, 2004

Target audience was African countries. Cameroon, Uganda, Morocco, and Tanzania attended.

The objective was to have leading Codex countries in Africa create a first draft of a strategic plan for CCAFRICA.

Central America Outreach

Tegucigalpa, Honduras, August 23-26, 2004

Target audience is Central American countries.

Dr. Murano, Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA will be speaking at a regional conference and meeting with Central American officials to discuss the importance of hemispheric cooperation on Codex issues.

U.S. Delegate and Caribbean Contact Points Outreach Seminar

Washington, DC, September 22, 2004

Target audience is the English-speaking Caribbean countries. Twelve countries have been invited.

The objectives are to provide the Codex Contact Points from this region with an opportunity to meet their counterparts in the U.S. Codex Office, U.S delegates, and other key U.S officials, to learn to participate more effectively in Codex, and to discuss the important issues that will be under consideration next year in Codex.