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February 16, 1999

TO: FSIS Docket Clerk
Docket No. 97-068N
USDA Food Safety & Inspection Services
Room 102
Cotton Annex, 300 12th Street S. W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-3700

RE: FSIS Expansion of the E-coli 0157:H7 Policy

We certainly do not agree with current FSIS thinking relative to expanding their policy on controlling E-coli 0157:H7. Our industry does not need any additional form of encumbrance added to our already over regulated free enterprise system. It appears that the FSIS is calling, the much touted HACCP approach to Food Safety, as a "failure". It would seem to the writer that we should continue to work within the spirit of the HACCP scientific philosophy which does not include condemning an entire sector of our meat supply without considerably more research and scientific data.

The present design of the HACCP process is a workable process and we consider it successful in assuring a safe food supply. We could enhance this type of food safety philosophy by better educating the general populace rather than laying the entire burden on the meat packing and processing industry.

The current concern for E-coli 0157:H7 in beef trimmings could be better served by a USDA/FSIS concerted education effort that would reach all areas of our modern day society. We certainly have considerable information mediums available. This would place more responsibility on the consuming public for their own food safety.

Sincerely,

Ken Schissler
Vice-President, GM

Copy: Kim Rice - AMI