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FSIS Docket Clerk  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
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**RE: FSIS Docket No. 99-062N Draft Report-The Future of FSIS Veterinarians:  
Public Health Professionals for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service known as FSIS is reviewing this draft report to decide on whether any changes will be made or not. There was a public meeting held on February 1, 2000 to receive comments and discuss the possibilities of revisions of the report.

Early last year, FSIS organized a group to discuss and set up a list of criteria to determine the involvement of veterinarians in some programs. The one I discuss is the implementation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Systems and pathogen reduction requirements for meat and poultry products. This Task Force included people from different backgrounds. They range from veterinarians inside and outside FSIS, FSIS management personnel, and individuals dealing with academia, non-government organizations, and foreign governments. The draft report developed by this Task Force is *The Future of FSIS Veterinarians: Public Health Professionals for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. This draft report refers to a few different issues. Among them are the future roles of the FSIS veterinarians, training programs, animal identification, and international credibility.

The panel of individuals on this Task Force has to decide on how, or even if at all, veterinary medicine and anything representative of the science of veterinary medicine can be used in the maintaining of food safety. The Task Force has the responsibility to determine if the role of veterinarians in public and animal health is relevant enough to be used in the decision process of food safety.

In my opinion, the role of veterinarians in determining food safety is very important. I look into the future of my veterinary career and realize that they could have a large impact on food safety and in turn the study of food safety could positively affect a

veterinarian's study and research. Veterinarians study the health of living animals and this is related to the quality and the safety of the meat that the consumers eat. This link could prove to be very important in the future.

I think FSIS needs to utilize the opportunity that veterinarians offer in their study of food safety. In another sense, there is no need to discount the assistance of the veterinarians because it can only help, not hurt. There should be certain guidelines that they should have to meet but veterinarians definitely should not be disregarded in this research. I hope the reviewed material will prove to be valuable and positively affect the research for FSIS and in turn, others, such as the consumers.