UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

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NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION

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October 13, 2006
8:30 a.m.

USDA South Building Cafeteria
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C.

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I-N-D-E-X

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(8:30 a.m.)

MR. TYNAN: Welcome to day 2 of our National Advisory Committee for Meat and Poultry Inspection, our fall meeting. I apologize for the slight delay. We wanted to give the two Subcommittees an opportunity to put the last finishing touches on their report, and in a couple of cases, try and print them out if we could.

What we're going to do this morning, I think initially we will do our two Subcommittee reports. I think originally we had talked about starting perhaps a little bit earlier this morning, but I think we completed that discussion yesterday. If there's any additional comments or things we need to talk about, perhaps we could do that at the end of the Subcommittee reports.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to introduce Dr. Carpenter and actually his Co-Chair, Mr. Govro, who helped out quite a bit last night in moving us forward on the inspection activities in processing.

Dr. Carpenter.

DR. CARPENTER: Good morning. Maybe I better face the other way, huh? We've captured the debriefing of the Committee. I have to give a deep sense of appreciation to members of the Committee that got very involved and made some very significant contributions. I think we've got -- I'm okay. I'll go along with this. But we also had some great input from the public and we've got them listed, and we've got these individuals here, Kim Rice, Kathy Grant, Jenny Scott, Felicia Nestor, and the Agency made input and it came from Bobby Palesano, Robert McKee, Don Anderson -- and Dr. Masters and Robert Tynan.

All right. So looking at -- we had three questions. Here's the first one that we had to evaluate. What information should we use to support the optimal levels of inspection? I'm just going to go through this. The question seeks to determine how many levels there should be in risk ratings and how the Agency will determine the number of levels.

Well, the Subcommittee started with five levels and as suggested in the issue paper and

discussed the pros and cons of using those levels. But if you go back and look at the chart that Bobby presented to us, and if you just look at things diagonally going from Level 1 to Level 5, you could never get a really good plant that is very consistent in its activities but it always is involved in inherently high risk product to get out of Level 3. Just think about it. They would always be at Level 3 if you look at that chart. I don't have it up on the screen, because the inherent risk of the product would never let them get any better than Level 3.

So then that got us to talking about those five levels. Now what about having levels in each axis? So the firms that had different levels of inherent risk and process control risks may not be appropriate. A firm that's low product inherent risk and high process control may not be equally risky with a firm that had high product inherent risk and low process control. The Subcommittee moved to -- concluded that the rankings would be -- would provide more detail or granularity if -- they could be listed separately, using a letter and number, thus creating

nine levels.

I think you're going to appreciate, if you go along one grid and use numbers, go along one the other grid and use letters, you'd theoretically start at the lower left-hand corner with a 1A or 1H and then gradually move up, using whatever letter structure, going back to a nine cubed grid, having a letter and a number for each of those grids. Okay.

And the example we gave here that we could go with 1H.

Information, talking about granularity, it would include manageability and, of course, training complexity overall in that evaluation of each facility. It would create problems for managing training and fewer levels would not allow for enough distinction between the levels, believe that plant management inspectors should have access to data that went into making the risk analysis determinations.

So that's question 1. Appropriate number of levels, of information, is that clear for all the members? Do any of the members of the Subcommittee want to make any input, members of the Committee.

Sandra.

MS. ESKIN: Sandra Eskin. Just one question. Could you define granularity?

DR. CARPENTER: Well, as you increase the number of levels, you obviously have a lot more specific details that you can deal with. So it increases more granules of sand on the beach, that's a poor analogy. If you have to look at each level --

MR. GOVRO: Michael Govro. That's Michael Kowalcyk's term and he's from the marketing world. I think he probably has a specific --

MR. KOWALCYK: I'll help try to clarify that, and I think it gets to that last sentence, too, about access to the data, and if you go back to the question as to what information should we use to support optimal levels in inspection, I think what we struggled with initially was what does Level 3 mean when you have a plant that has inherently high risk product but their processes are very good, whereas you've got a plant that has lower risk product but the processes, there's more variable process control. So there's issues there. There's higher risk there.

And the reason why we came up with identifying each box in that matrix as a level and what we mean by granularity is I have a plant that's a Level 3 and my neighbor down the street has a plant that's Level 3, but we're a Level 3 for different reasons. And bringing in both axes into your decision making gets you to that additional level of detail, and in our recommendation we included that having data available to the inspectors, and even to the plant, is that if you go back and look at the data wheel, and all the potential inputs that could go into a risk-based management system, you would want to arm the inspectors with enough information so that they can focus. If they have to increase their intensity of inspection, where does that get focused, and we're hoping that that information other than just, okay, Mike's processing plant, you're in box 9, what does that mean? Well, you're in box 9 because of this, this, and this, and this is what the inspectors are going to be focusing on.

So that's why having that -- it's kind of like -- there's a level of granularity in that I'm

Level 3 or whatever the level is, I don't think it matters, but within a level, there's also going to be differences. Even if you look at your least risky plants, in that Level 1 box, the lowest risk box, let's say you've got 100 plants in there, you're going to have the best and then you're going to have the 99th plant. So do you treat them both the same? You don't know. There's probably some additional information that should be included, and that's why that was in there, and maybe using this type of structure would add to that.

Now we're also sensitive to the fact that that creates added complexity as a management tool. So that's something that the Agency, we would hope look at and see how they can address that and that's why we included that in there. Does that help?

MS. ESKIN: It does. Thanks.

DR. CARPENTER: Okay. Any other comments, questions, input on Question 1?

DR. RAYMOND: It sounds fine to me. Like I said, we picked five one night because we needed numbers. Nine is not unmanageable at all. The only

question I might have, and I'll just use the two that were the twos, right now, if you can remember the matrix, you can be a 2 because you've got a medium risk product but you have good control over, and you can be a 2 because you have a very safe product but you've got medium quality control. Did you talk at all about which one of those would get more resources and inspection truly for food safety? I mean we would like that plant that can move over to 1 to move, but we also need to protect the people from the product. Did you talk about how -- which one of those would rank higher in your mind I guess is what I'm asking.

MR. SCHAD: Yeah, this is Mark Schad. I think, Dr. Raymond, you'll see that later on in that report how we address those concerns.

DR. RAYMOND: Great.

DR. CARPENTER: Okay. Moving onto question 2, what are -- we start off with what are the essential inspection activities for Level 1 inspection?

So we looked at the kinds of things that do take place during inspection, and they're listed here.

You notice that we talked about records review, both for HACCP, SSOP and the pathogen, also the on site observations including pre-operational inspection, and then, of course, Bob McKee made a point about the other consumer protection verification procedures, you know, such as labeling and other things that might have an economic impact, that are just part of what is done when an inspector does get into the plant.

So we realize that this is a fairly comprehensive list in general terms, and none of the recurrent inspection activities should be left out. The Agency should use the risk ranking and other information to determine the frequency of how much time should be spent on each activity. This gets back to Dr. Raymond's issue about resources I hope. It will be important to consider the factors that determine each plant's ranking when assigning inspection activities. Okay.

Certainly many things to do. The issue is more not what we do but more in terms of how often does activity, depending on where, where the establishment fits into the categories. What things

do you think are one or two things that would be, as a -- for food safety on a daily basis. CCP verification, sanitation verification, both operation and periodic and pathogen reduction activities where required. We would expect inspection personnel to conduct a walkthrough on arrival, and if there are issues that need to be attended to, we would expect inspectors to address those issues, those things. There's a concern that a limit of inspection of the CCPs may not be good science. Some plants manage CCPs to eliminate inspection.

What we meant by that is that there are -- the layout of some plants is such that it's -- since the inspector has the option of randomly choosing which CCP to investigate, it may be that the layout is such that on a regular basis, one particular CCP is evaluated and when they are in a remote part of the plant, is ignored. So we tried to get at the issue of making sure that all of them, over the course of many inspections are, in fact, addressed. That was it for question 2. I'll roll it back up and get some questions here.

MR. GOVRO: Mike Govro. I actually think those last couple of paragraphs we had intended to edit out. Those were some of Robert's sort of catching the conversation as it went along. Some of that does get to a little bit of what Dr. Raymond was asking about, how we were thinking about assigning activities but I guess we should consider whether or not there's anything we should capture in the report there in those last two paragraphs. Because we had intended to edit those out.

DR. CARPENTER: These right here.

MR. GOVRO: Yeah. And while I've got my mic on, if I might just address Dr. Raymond's question about how we assign activities and which axis was more important. We didn't specifically discuss which axis should have more weight but I think one of the most important points we made up there is that the reason the firm ended up with a ranking should bear on how you assign the inspection activities. So that if this is a firm that has had problems with CCPs, then you'll want to spend time looking at their CCPs and how they follow those.

MR. KOWALCYK: Yeah, I'm hearing what I need to hear. It's the -- at that Level 1 plant, just remember that plant, their CCPs are looked over good every day of the year for three years in a row, and so that's -- we just want to make sure that if we stop doing that every day, we do it every other day or something like that, and use those resources in the plant that needs the CCPs looked at more. And that's what you guys are saying.

DR. CARPENTER: So our intent was to leave these two paragraphs out. Do I hit the delete button, Committee? All Committee members present? Can you live with that? Delete.

MR. ELFERING: Maybe not.

(Laughter.)

DR. CARPENTER: You can reverse it, whatever that thing is called.

All right. We're at question 3. Okay. What other inspection -- oh, gees. What other inspection activities do you consider appropriate to perform in RBI above Level 1 or 1/L or whatever the definition finally comes to be?

Agency inspection personnel should perform all applicable PBIS [Performance Based Inspection System] procedures such as verification, apply -- verification activities which include calibration activities, direct observation and records review. Does that capture all that we were talking about, gang? Subcommittee? Other things to add by other members of the Committee. Okay.

Another task would be review of corrective action activities, all -- to make sure there is adequate implementation of those corrective actions. These activities and frequency or intensity is dependent on the length to where a plant fits along the X Y axis categories. Inspectors should document the regulatory requirements of HACCP, SSOP, SPS [Sanitation Performance Standards] procedures that have been verified. Activities should be considered at all levels of intensity. That's our input for question 3.

Did we -- did I miss some pieces, my colleagues? Michael, is there more? Michael, does the whole thing copy over? Mike Govro. I think so.

MR. GOVRO: I think that last --

DR. CARPENTER: The last paragraph. Inspection activity intensity should increase with less control of the plant and increase product inherent risk. Make sense? Intensity is not necessary proportionate to the risk number. This one makes the randomness and focuses or targets inspection efforts. Intensity suggests the frequency of activities in time that it may be necessary for inspection presence to be there for increased oversight and to perform unscheduled inspection activities. This is more critical in plants that have demonstrated very little control.

MR. TYNAN: Yes. Dr. Harris.

DR. HARRIS: Joe Harris. A question about that paragraph particularly the second sentence. Could you elaborate on that? I don't know exactly what you mean. It would seem to me that the whole purpose that we're about with risk-based inspection is to make it the level of intensity proportional to the risk factor.

DR. CARPENTER: Well, I think the discussion

was, if you go from a plant that either produces either a couple of thousand pounds and one a couple of million, you're not going to do a couple of million increases in activities. So it wouldn't have to be proportional --

MR. GOVRO: Joe -- Mike Govro. I think the other part of that point we're trying to make is that a 2 doesn't get twice as many resources as a 1 and a 3 gets twice as many as a 2. It's --

DR. CARPENTER: Does it answer it or address it?

MS. ESKIN: Dr. Carpenter, I have a question as well.

DR. CARPENTER: Yes.

MS. ESKIN: Sandra Eskin. Back to that last paragraph, up a little bit, or down a little bit, depending on where you're going.

DR. CARPENTER: This one here.

MS. ESKIN: There's a sentence, do I see up there, that talks about, yeah, that there be more intense inspection activity if there was a loss of control and then the second part of the sentence, and

increase product inherent risk. Did you all talk about a scenario that involved the latter? I think there's at least some sort of presumption that the product inherent risk doesn't change, and I was just wondering how you -- if you thought of a situation where that actually might be the case.

DR. CARPENTER: Mike.

MR. KOWALCYK: I can try to answer that. This goes back to some of the small group discussions earlier in the week about, you could have a plant where they're processing a certain product, let's say they're grinding poultry, has a different inherent risk than another poultry product would, it was the same facility. So you may increase your -- you may redirect your inspection after it's based on the change in the product risk.

MS. ESKIN: But it's really a change -- that situation arises, correct me if I'm wrong here, when the plant is producing different products.

MR. KOWALCYK: Right. Right, and I think the assumption we're all making is that where a plant falls in that two axes plane will change over time.

MS. ESKIN: Sure. It also depends on if in the formula you're able to do a risk analysis and then an assignment of inspection for each product. We also had these discussions during the workshop, or do you set the inspection level to the most risky product or something. I mean that's something still to be worked out.

MR. KOWALCYK: Yeah, we didn't go into the details of that.

MS. ESKIN: Right.

MR. KOWALCYK: I think getting back to Joe's comment about proportionality, I'll use the expert elicitation as an example. You had some experts say that, you know, their riskiest product was 20 times as risky as the least risky and then you had someone who said it was 300 million times as risky. So, again proportionality is still something we're, you know, is a Level 1 --

MS. ESKIN: Right.

MR. KOWALCYK: -- three times as risky as a Level 3.

MS. ESKIN: But again the presumption is --

MR. KOWALCYK: It looks like it is but you don't know until you see what the actual algorithm is put in.

MS. ESKIN: Sure. But I guess I'm not sure I understand again that the theory is there will be a certain range of products, whether it's the 24 bit or whatever, and that each individual product is going to have to be assigned a value or a number that represents that product's inherent risk. And what you're talking about is a scenario where you have a plant that produces different products with different levels of risk.

MR. KOWALCYK: Yes. That would be right.

MS. ESKIN: Okay.

DR. CARPENTER: Mike Govro.

MR. GOVRO: Yeah, as I was working on this last night, a thought occurred to me, and it may be so obvious that it doesn't need stating, but it was an assumption that I was operating on, and thought maybe I should throw it out in case it needs discussion, and that is that my thinking on this is that the rankings that you come up with for a firm, should not limit you

to minimum amounts of inspection for that firm, that you should always have the ability, regardless of the ranking, to assign more inspection activity at that firm.

DR. CARPENTER: Any other comments? Members of the Committee, Subcommittee?

(No response.)

DR. CARPENTER: Fair enough, Dr. Masters?

(No response.)

DR. CARPENTER: That concludes our addressing the three questions. I want to particularly thank Mike Govro for doing a lot of formatting, wordsmithing and having his breakfast interrupted this morning, et cetera, as he got this into the right format. Thanks, Mike.

MR. TYNAN: That concludes Subcommittee 1. Thank you, Dr. Carpenter. I appreciate that.

I just wanted to mention to the group that what we propose to do is -- there was not a failure in the public school system if you saw a grammatical errors and things of that nature in there. We're doing everything pretty fast. So what I would propose

to do for this report and Dr. Denton's, if he's in agreement, we'll do a little formatting, editing, so that everything looks pretty similar in the two reports. I'll send that out to the Committees again. If there's any controversy or if there's any -- or if in the editing process we changed anything substantive, then please let us know, and we'll fix it, and then you can just sort of concur and we'll be done. So it's one more step in the process.

And with that, I'm going to invite Dr. Denton to come up and do his report on Subcommittee 2 which was Using Risk in Slaughter.

DR. DENTON: While Robert is helping getting the report up on the screen, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to our Subcommittee. That included Kevin Elfering from Minnesota, Sandra Eskin, Mike Finnegan, Joe Harris, Irene Leech and Charles Link. We didn't list all of the other participants that were in the room with us, but we had quite a good collection of folks that were there to help in providing input into our discussions. I also want to recognize Gloria who assisted with the

preparation of the report.

We had a quite wide ranging discussion of issues within our Subcommittee. One of the things that we did was we probably spent the first 15 or 20 minutes talking about exactly what the FSIS inspector within a plant does as a way to set a platform for what we were going to be talking about in dealing with using risk in slaughter operations.

The questions that we addressed in this were those that were outlined in the PowerPoint presentation that Phil Derfler presented to us yesterday. I think we'll go ahead and jump in since we have six of those to deal with.

The first one had two parts. The first part of the questions is, are there things other than verifying the condition of the carcass, pathogens and process control, that the Agency should be accomplishing on a risk-based approach to inspection at slaughter?

Now realizing that we've been provided a pretty blank slate there, we came up with one fairly straightforward answer to that, and what we thought

was the most appropriate thing to do is to prioritize food safety concerns in terms of risk related to human health rather than economic and quality issues. So we really aren't adding anything as much as we are taking away some of the things that the inspector currently has responsibility for in the plant environment.

The second part of that question, how can risk be factored into the accomplishment of these purposes, we said prioritize the risks from most important to least important, again based on the risk to human health.

Question number 2 -- I might stop right there and see if anyone has a comment from the Committee that would add anything to that?

(No response.)

DR. DENTON: Okay. Hearing none, we'll move to the second question. What is the best way for the Agency to deploy its personnel to accomplish the purposes of inspection?

In this, we had quite a lengthy discussion and we tried to pull out what we thought were the three most pertinent things here. First is to examine

the risk, where they occurred within the processing environment, and focus attention on the highest risk operations.

The second thing is that verification of the food safety system data will require well-educated personnel to interpret the data because we're depending more and more on scientific data to help make these determinations. We feel that that's a key element that must be taken into consideration.

And obviously we have to maintain on-line inspection as required to meet the statute. Now we didn't get into any of the details about how that will be done, but it has to be met.

Question number 3, what comments do you have on the use of this type of approach to guide how FSIS deploys its inspection resources in slaughter operations? And in this one, we think that it is really important to look more broadly at the food safety management system across the system within the plant. We had a lot of discussion about how plants manage food safety within their individual systems, and the statement that we have here, whether plants

adopt anti-microbial interventions or other food safety systems, FSIS should verify the effectiveness of the process within the plant, recognizing that we have certain establishments that may manage food safety issues outside the processing environment, in the production side.

Now obviously the FSIS personnel can't get into that part of it, but they can certainly through the use of data verify that that process has been effective in addressing the food safety concerns.

Question number 4, is what effect should consideration of risk have on what we ask our inspection program personnel to do? And in this one, because we were dealing primarily with slaughter, we believe that the product inherent risk is -- safety management system. We also believe that we need to prioritize inspection personnel activities, based on risk to public health by focusing on processes that result in potential increases or reductions in human pathogens. We need to focus on anyplace that there can be an increase or a reduction, follow that with the concept that we optimize processes in which

potential reductions in human pathogens can occur, and manage or control processes resulting in potential increases in human pathogens.

The final comment I think under question 4 is that the Agency should use HACCP principles in assigning inspection duties within the plant, again based on the concept of addressing inspection where the risk and the need for inspection is the greatest.

Question number 5, what comments do you have on inspection personnel performing these types of tasks at slaughter? There was a concern that we have records being kept locally, even the electronic version of records, were used by FSIS personnel in monitoring the process. There is also a need to require at least a minimum level of sampling for microbial pathogen verification that must be conducted by FSIS. If data from industry is utilized, it must be verified by FSIS personnel who are qualified to make the assessment, again getting back to the concept that we need well-educated folks that are interpreting this information.

And the final question, what should the FSIS

inspector's response in the event of an emerging problem, in reviewing the process? What should they do in the event that through their assessment of the food safety system?

And there are two events there that we dealt with. One, in the event of a regulatory non-compliance, the Agency should take action, exactly as we already do.

And the second situation, in the event that a finding has not risen to a non-compliance event, FSIS should get plant management involved as quickly as possible in order to address this before it gets into a situation that would involve non-compliance, here the concept being that if we have information and we anticipate that something is occurring that poses a threat to public health, that the Agency and the plant management need to take action at the earliest opportunity to intervene in that situation.

That concludes the questions that we attempted to address, realizing that we had an open blackboard to work with. Again, I think we had a lot of good discussion from everyone involved. It was

very helpful to have Dr. Bratcher and Robert and Stan in the room to address some of the questions that came up about actual activities at the local level.

I'd be happy to entertain any questions that you might have.

MR. TYNAN: Questions from the group?

MR. ELFERING: Dr. Masters.

DR. MASTERS: On question number 5, you talked about FSIS doing some pathogen testing as I understood it. Was there a discussion whether that should be *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, a combination of both. And I know in our baseline, we're looking at doing multiple points in the process. Did you guys get into any of that in your level of discussion?

DR. DENTON: We talked about all of those particular pathogens, recognizing that what we need to be focusing on are those pathogens that have the greatest impact on human health, and specifically mentioned in the discussion were *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, but not restricted to that. We didn't want to restrict it at all with regard to where the Agency goes in that regard.

DR. DENTON: Mike.

MR. KOWALCYK: Michael Kowalcyk. I guess going up to question 1 about the prioritizing tasks, focus on public health, things that have public health implications. I guess this is maybe a broad question to the Agency I guess, a listing of -- I wasn't in on this Subcommittee. So I would be interested to learn about what those tasks are and where they -- I guess where the incremental value of each task is because it seems like in the statutory requirement, it's very clear that it's carcass-by-carcass inspection, but there are certain things that the best inspectors are going to look at. So I don't know if the Agency has done any work in the way of aggregating that information as to what field personnel are doing and what they feel are the most critical things. I don't know if the Agency has any additional insight they can share with this Committee or stakeholders with regard to that.

DR. DENTON: I will defer to Dr. Masters on that one.

DR. MASTERS: I'm asking Phil to come up

because he has had some work done as far as looking at different points in the process and what we're seeing at different points in the process. I'm going to ask him to talk a little bit about the work that some of the staff at the Tech Service Center have been able to do.

MR. DERFLER: We are in the process of doing a literature review to see what can be accomplished at the various steps in the process. We've focused so far on the effect on *Salmonella*, which we produced in the compliance guidance *Salmonella* that we published. But we intend to look at the literature to see what other things can be accomplished by inspection personnel at each point and, you know, depending on where this goes and how this all works out, we'll use it as we consider appropriate but we have been looking at the literature to see what we can find.

MR. KOWALCYK: As a follow up to that analysis, does the Agency see that as an issue that would be brought to this Committee or to the NACMCF Committee or what, what -- where will you take it once you're done with that literature review? How will

that be communicated out to stakeholders?

DR. MASTERS: That particular piece of literature review was initially presented at our public meeting for *Salmonella* last August, and it was presented there, and we also will be working with RESOLVE on the poultry slaughter. So I think we're looking at various for, depending on where we end up on this, but it will certainly be a public process, yes.

MR. KOWALCYK: Thank you.

DR. DENTON: Charles.

MR. LINK: Charles Link. Well, first I just want to recognize Dr. Denton. It always amazes me how he can take the conversation we had yesterday and condense it to a couple of pages. I don't know how you do all that but -- because we went around and around on a lot of issues.

And one of the things I think, Barb, to kind of get to your point, too, we spent some time talking about some of the work the industry is doing with bio-mapping efforts, looking at, you know, incoming loads all the way through post-chill, and I think we were

trying to get to when we were talking about this, the food safety system and looking at the data and interpreting and working with that, was to get to the point of where do we have control or where should you guys focus your efforts rather than post-chill which you currently do. So I just wanted to kind of -- I don't know if I clarified that but just to touch on that. So --

DR. DENTON: Thank you. Charles. I appreciate that kind of remark. Chris.

DR. BRATCHER: I was just going to add to the same thing Charles mentioned, plus we also had some pretty good discussion on some of the regulatory requirements of some of the OCP tasks, and we really didn't make a determination as to how that should be handled or what should be handled, but it does need to be addressed at some point because leukosis is a condemnable condition, just as one example, but it still is an OCP task. So there needs to be -- the Agency needs to do some work there, and I think that's a common thing that has been brought up before.

DR. DENTON: Thank you. Anyone else have a

comment, question?

(No response.)

DR. DENTON: Mr. Chairman, I move that we accept the report.

MR. TYNAN: I'm going to do that for both reports right now. Thank you for reminding me, Jim.

DR. DENTON: Thank you.

MR. TYNAN: We have both the reports concluded and we've had a little conversation, made a few comments, not much in the way of changes in the reports. Can I assume from the discussion that both the reports are acceptable?

(No response.)

MR. TYNAN: Okay. Pending my editing and working on the grammar from my report, we'll fix that up and have it back to you next week, but we'll assume that the reports are accepted as they were presented. Thank you.

I think we had -- yesterday we had on our agenda to do the Legislative Update and I chatted with Lisa, caught her off guard this morning, and she was kind enough to come back today. I think she answered

some of your questions individually, but if you had some additional questions on the Legislative Update why don't we take those now before we have the public comment period. Are there any questions on the Legislative Update. Dr. Carpenter.

DR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Robert. I would like to publicly acknowledge an oversight when I made my presentation, in that if we did not have Robert Tynan as our scribe, we never would have had this wonderful documentation to work with last night as we formulated it into something that could, in fact, forwarded to the Agency. So thank you, Robert.

But I do have a question on the budget. Lisa, there is a point in the budget that talks about $105 million in user fees. Is this going to change the cost structure for our producers? What's the impact of that?

MS. PICARD: Right now the Bill as it stands does not include the user fees.

DR. CARPENTER: It's not what?

MS. PICARD: The Bill as it stands right now does not include the user fees.

DR. CARPENTER: Okay.

MR. TYNAN: Andrea.

DR. GRONDAHL: I didn't see what portion of that request is for state meat inspection programs. Can you tell me what amount was requested for state programs and how that compares to the FY '06 request?

MS. PICARD: I will have to get back to you on that. We were having some conversation about it yesterday with Dr. Leech because I know she was also interested in that, and I'm going to try to find some specific numbers for her but I don't have those yet. So I'll follow up with you later this morning.

MR. TYNAN: Mr. Govro.

MR. GOVRO: Mike Govro. This is not exactly a legislative question but it's probably as close as to the category as we'll get. I just would like to know what the status of the Agency's Proposed Rule on distribution of recall information is.

MS. PICARD: I will kindly defer to somebody else to answer that. Phil, apparently you're the lucky one this morning.

MR. DERFLER: Phil Derfler. The answer is

we're reviewing the comments, which is the first step that we do. We will analyze the comments and then after that, we'll start preparing the Final Rule.

MR. TYNAN: Nice try, Phil.

MR. DERFLER: It's hard to come through with a timeline because a lot of the process we don't have control over, but Dr. Raymond is interest in this rule, and so we are working on it actively.

MR. TYNAN: I apologize. I sort of checked out on the conversation there. Are there other comments on the Legislative Update?

(No response.)

MR. TYNAN: Okay. Cool. Thank you very much. Thank you, Lisa.

I think we're at the point in our Agenda where we have our public comment and wrap up. So again I looked at the list in the -- at the registration table. I didn't notice that anyone had signed up but I'll leave it up to the audience. If there is anyone who would like to make a comment at this point for the public record. Please, sir, if you would come up and state your name and your

affiliation, I would appreciate it.

MR. MAIER: My name is Wolf-Martin Maier. I'm from the European Commission. If you have these sort of meetings, you always hear a lot of criticisms. I also want to stand up and express our support for this project. The European Commission is in charge of food safety for 500 million consumers in Europe, and we are doing the same thing. Nobody can claim that meat inspection is optimal, but it's also clear that the solution cannot be that we throw even more taxpayers' money at the issue. We have to use our resources more wisely, and this is exactly what we're doing, what we are trying to do in Europe as you do here, and I have a lot of sympathy and also support for this project.

I appreciate your process of transparency and of stakeholder comments. I really find this admirable. In particular, you are confronted with a lot of criticism -- give you some support, and what I think if we are, I said this already several times, if authorities are moving towards changing their practices, it is always important to keep in mind the

implications, potential implications for international trade if there are -- practices developing in different countries.

But I also see there are a lot of opportunity in these movements. So because nobody has all the expertise, and I just wanted to float the idea whether this might not be an opportunity to have some sort of an international -- on the issue to draw in the expertise from other countries, because look at the Netherlands, Denmark, New Zealand. They're quite good in their meat inspection practices. They are leading together with you, they're leading the field and it might be helpful for both sides, for us and also for you if we would perhaps look at the idea of joining these people together and to insure that there is an even level of information -- not only TransAtlantic but I also mentioned New Zealand and other countries which are fairly advanced in technology because nobody knows it all.

And I think if you really want to meet our healthy citizen goals which you have for the U.S. after listening to this, we got to have some -- draw

in ideas of what other people's strategies are, and if we don't draw in all the best practices, we won't get there. Thank you.

MR. TYNAN: Thank you, sir. Are there any other comments from the audience?

(No response.)

MR. TYNAN: Any others from the Committee? Mr. Link.

MR. LINK: General comments.

MR. TYNAN: Please.

MR. LINK: Just since we're at kind of a lull here, I'll take this opportunity to thank the Agency for my last six years on this Committee. I'm leaving today. You know, I think it's fair to say over the past six years, we've been allowed more than our share of softball, non-controversial type issues which has kind of frustrated the Committee a little bit. We always complain about getting information late, and that's just the way we are. So we're going to do that continually.

But I do want to commend the Agency though for bringing forth a very important topic. Risk-based

inspection is controversial, no question. We've got a lot of issues, a lot of sides to talk about, but it's nice to see that the Agency is coming to this Committee of experts I guess if you want to use that term for input. So it's unfortunate that I am leaving now because this is what I came for. So now I have to leave, but I do want to thank the Agency for giving me the opportunity. I'm going to miss it. I've made a lot of good friends. I'll miss seeing them every six months. But I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity.

MR. TYNAN: Thank you, Charles, and, of course, you know you can always come back to the meetings anyway. You don't have to be on the Committee. You can always come back and put your two cents worth in. Any other comments? Mr. Govro?

MR. GOVRO: Yeah, I just want to echo what Charles said. I think he speaks for all of us, in that we've enjoyed our relationship with people at FSIS that we've worked with. You've been very professional and collegial and sometimes I marvel at your ability to stay calm when we get into some of

these firestorms. So I appreciate the opportunity to have worked with you and like Charles, I have mixed motions about leaving. It's a big deal for me to come out here from the West Coast, a lot of time and effort, but sometimes frustrating but it has been very interesting to watch the process and be a part of it.

MR. TYNAN: Thank you, Michael. Other comments from the Committee?

(No response.)

MR. TYNAN: How about any comments from our representatives or employee organizations? You're not obligated, Chris.

DR. BRATCHER: I do, I do appreciate the fact that we were allowed to participate, and I think in the breakout group yesterday that Stanley and I offered some things that maybe some other people didn't understand, and I think maybe that that's a two way street of communication, and for the people that are on the committee here, to realize what we are doing actually in the field and the work we do and how dedicated our workforce is, making sure that we do it the right way for the right reasons, is extremely

important, and I commend you for having us come in for this meeting.

MR. TYNAN: Thank you, Dr. Bratcher.

MR. McKEE: I really can't improve on what Chris said. It's been a pleasure to be here, and hopefully we've shed some light on some areas that weren't as clear as maybe they should have been. There's a lot of potential for this type of process, and I hope everybody just perseveres and works towards a common goal that we have, and that's safe food. So thank you for the opportunity.

MR. TYNAN: Thank you, Bob. And we're going to let Ms. Eskin get the last word in since her voice is coming back.

MS. ESKIN: Thank you. I just wanted to echo what these gentlemen just said. I guess not until this round did I appreciate how critical it was to have people from the inspection force and those who work in the plants sitting around a table with those of us who are giving advice about meat and poultry inspection. Maybe it's a no-brainer, but I just would hope that this is now a permanent structural change in

how these meetings are run because we really, especially get into the details of how inspection is and should be done. That's a part of the story that we absolutely have to include. Thank you.

MR. TYNAN: Thank you, Sandra. And at this point, I'm going to turn it back over to the Chairperson -- oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Elfering. If you had a glass, I could have heard you.

MR. ELFERING: I'm going to get the last word. I actually, and I should never make the assumption that I'm going to be re-appointed, but I think I'd like to think that the people that have worked here for the last six years, and I hope that -- actually, I've learned a lot from everybody here, and I think that's always important that anytime that you put a group like this together, that you actually learn a lot from each other.

I hope that the new appointees are going to be as positive people to work with, and I think that's what's really been beneficial about this group, is we work well together, and nobody has had a single agenda that they've tried to push. We've really worked for

the common good of the public health, and hopefully that will be sustained.

MR. TYNAN: Everybody wants the last word. Mr. Govro.

MR. GOVRO: I was just waiting for all the important comments to be finished because and this doesn't need to be a part of the record, but I lost a little brown glasses case. If anybody finds it, I'd love to have it back. Thank you.

(Laughter.)

MR. TYNAN: I'm going to turn it back over to Dr. Masters.

DR. MASTERS: I will keep it brief, but I do want to say thanks to all of you. It's been a long four days, but I think it's certainly been well worth it.

From an Agency perspective, we have gotten tremendous input, and we appreciate that, and we've gotten tremendous input on specific questions we've asked here. We got tremendous input from the process we have with RESOLVE, and hopefully it's starting to be a little bit clearer how all of this is coming

together. Certainly from an Agency perspective, we believe we've got a lot of input that's going to be very useful to us as we move forward. We've got a lot of work to do. I think that's very clear. But it's a lot easier to do that work when you get constructive, substantive input that helps move us along our way. So I think you for all of that work that you did.

I stayed with the Subcommittee that was in this room yesterday and they were struggling, and said, well, we need to change the question. Well, change the question. If you can change the question and get substantive input, it's not the question we care about. It's the input we care about, and by doing so, they were able to bring us some very useful input. And so we really do appreciate all that hard work that you do, and the comment about Dr. Denton and how he talks all of that stuff and then turns it into something useful to give back to the Agency, it's just tremendous to me, every time we hold these meetings that you can spend two or three hours in the afternoon and bring back useful information to the Agency because you always do, and we really do appreciate

that.

And this is not the only opportunity, these four days, but I can't encourage you enough to submit comments to our website. That's what it's there for. The RESOLVE report is going to be up, and have that opportunity, and the employee organizations, we brought them last time. We had to stick with a little bit more local and ask some local employee reps to join us. This time, at the beginning of a new fiscal cycle, we were able to invite and let them choose who they wanted to send, and we do believe it's appropriate. We saw at the last meeting how helpful they were to the Subcommittees, and we do see that as a permanent part moving forward of having employee representatives sitting at the table with you and working in the Subcommittees because we did find it very constructive. And we're hopeful and what we saw last time, is that they put articles in their association magazines where they could share what they learned at these meetings, and get the information from these meetings out to their membership. And I think that's helpful because then they're helping to

educate what's happening in this process throughout our workforce, and that's another means that we have to get the information out to the workforce. So we really do appreciate all three of them being here because we also found their information very useful and constructive. So Stan, Bob, Chris, thanks to all of you for being here and spending your time.

I want to specifically thank the Committee members that are serving their third term that can't reapply, and I want to do that by name. So bear with me just briefly. Some of you have said, who are they?

Gladys, is she still here? Gladys, thank you so much. David, hiding next to her. James -- you're all in a row over there. Kevin. Kevin snuck out on us. Joseph. Joseph has one more term with us. Sandra, thank you very much. Irene Leech, she indicated yesterday she was not going to be back today. Charles, thank you, and then Mike Govro. So thanks to all of you for the three solid terms that you gave us.

(Applause.)

DR. MASTERS: And we are very hopeful that

the rest of you will be reapplying for your additional terms that you have to serve.

So again, thank you and again, we can't express enough the time that you've put in to making this successful, not only a two day Committee meeting but also the four days and the work that you did with RESOLVE workshop as well.

So with that said, thank you very much, and safe travels to all. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the attached proceedings in the matter of:

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON

MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION

Washington, D.C.

October 13, 2006

were held as herein appears, and that this is the original transcription thereof for the files of the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service.

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Nicholas Guarino, Reporter

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