

# FDA/FSIS Food Safety Survey Methods

Amy Lando, MPP

Consumer Studies Team

Office of Scientific Analysis and Support  
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Food Safety Educators Conference, Orlando, FL  
September 18-20, 2002

## Outline

- Type of information collected
- Survey background and methods
- How FSS data can be used

## Background

- Nationally representative (US) random dial digit telephone surveys
- 4 waves of data collected:
  - 1988, 1993, 1998, 2001
- Sample sizes: 1620 – 4482
- Adults only (Age 18 and up)

## Type of Information Collected

- Food handling behaviors
- Risky food consumption
- Food safety knowledge
- Risk perceptions of getting a foodborne illness
- Experience with foodborne illness and allergies
- Demographic variables

## Questionnaire Development

- Needs of the FDA and USDA
- Tracking questions
- Minimize socially desirable answers
- Rotate multi-part questions
- Keep survey as short as possible
- Cognitive Interviews
- Pretests

## Sample Selection and Data Collection for 2001

The interview process

- Sampling frame: All households with telephone in US
- Hholds selected using Random Digit Dialing procedure: GENESYS
- Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI)

## Maximize Response Rate

- Advance letter
- Minimum of 18 calls to establish contact
- Designated Respondents who initially refuse sent a letter encouraging participation
- Spanish language interviewer
- Survey fielded over 4 month period

## Data Quality

- FDA staff member participated in interviewer training
- Supervisor monitors interviews
- Production rates and sample disposition monitored daily for problems

## Data Weights

- Each wave adjusted for design weight
  - # of adults in household
  - # of phone lines
- Each wave adjusted for population distribution:
  - Current Population Survey: gender, race, education

## Food Safety Survey Data Uses

- See how the population is doing as a whole
- Can look at subpopulations
- Benchmark for the nation
- Multiple food safety topics in one survey

## Use of FSS Data by Educators

- Help to determine where/how Food Safety Education should be targeted: topics and subgroups
- Compare effects of targeted programs with national trends
- Can use the same questions as those on the FSS

## Limitations of Survey Data

- Self reporting behavior: a potential problem
- Other methods: Not nationally representative
  - In home studies
  - Focus groups
  - Local surveys

## Contact Information

[amy.lando@cfsan.fda.gov](mailto:amy.lando@cfsan.fda.gov)