



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The Honorable F. J. Mulhern, D.V.M.
Administrator, Animal and Plant Health
Inspection Service
Department of Agriculture

368

Dear Dr. Mulhern:

The General Accounting Office has completed a survey of Federal food inspection activities in Michigan. Our survey primarily concentrated on the inspections performed by the Department of Agriculture Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). We looked into the extent to which food firms were inspected by both agencies and whether any inspection activities could be combined on a national level through the use of cooperative agreements to better use inspection resources.

2/

148

When a firm produces both meat and non-meat food products, it may be subject to inspection by both FDA and APHIS. Both agencies inspect the firm for many of the same things. For example, both APHIS and FDA regulations require that firms be inspected to assure the firms have

- no animal or insect infestation,
- adequate ventilation to minimize odors and noxious fumes,
- sufficient water available at a proper temperature to allow effective washing of facilities, and
- adequate drainage to protect against contamination.

During our survey, we identified nine food firms in Michigan that were inspected by both APHIS and FDA at the same time. Each agency inspected these plants for the same sanitary conditions. We believe this duplication of effort has resulted because FDA and APHIS do not have cooperative agreements to use inspection results from each other's inspections and because inspection reports are not normally exchanged by agencies. Two examples are shown below.

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Saluto Foods Corporation--Benton Harbor, Michigan

Saluto is a medium size producer of frozen pizzas. About 99 percent of the firm's products are meat pizzas and the other 1 percent contain only cheese. The firm is under continuous APHIS inspection and is also inspected by FDA. The resident APHIS inspector told us that he performs the same plant sanitation inspection regardless of whether meat or non-meat pizzas are produced. FDA's inspection of plant sanitation conditions, however, results in a duplication of effort. For example, during its latest inspection in April 1975, FDA inspected the firm's procedures followed in washing down and sanitizing equipment. APHIS inspects these same procedures on a daily basis.

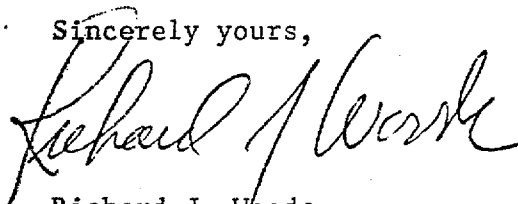
Gerbers Products Company--Fremont, Michigan

The Gerbers' plant manufactures a complete line of baby food products. Both meat and non-meat items are produced. The plant is inspected by FDA and is also under continuous APHIS inspection. The resident APHIS inspector told us that he inspects the plant's overall sanitation conditions even though non-meat products are produced in the plant. FDA's inspection of the plant's sanitary conditions results in a duplication of effort. For example, during FDA's latest inspection on July 2, 1975, the plant was inspected for rodents and insect infestation. APHIS also inspects for rodents and insects. The next FDA inspection is scheduled for January 1976.

We believe the duplication of effort shown in the above examples may be significant nationally, particularly in view of FDA's limited staff and vast workload. We recommend that the Commissioner of FDA and the Administrator of APHIS determine the extent to which duplication of effort exists between FDA and APHIS and, as appropriate, enter into a cooperative agreement to avoid both agencies inspecting sanitation conditions of the same plants.

By separate letter we have also advised the Commissioner of FDA of this problem and the need for cooperative agreements. We would appreciate being advised of your views and any action you plan to take with regard to the matters discussed in this report.

Sincerely yours,



Richard J. Woods
Associate Director