

**STATEMENT BY AGRICULTURE UNDER SECRETARY NANCY
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As a result of the melamine contamination of Chinese infant formula, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began testing United States manufactured infant formula for melamine detection. FDA's study released on November 28 indicates that levels of melamine found in infant formula are extremely low and should not raise public health concerns. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) relies on FDA's authority regarding the safety of infant formula available in the U.S.

FDA's ongoing investigation continues to show that the domestic supply of infant formula is safe and that consumers can continue using U.S. manufactured infant formulas. Based on FDA's assessment, USDA/FNS is not recommending that WIC agencies take any action that affects the infant formula issued to WIC participants at the present time.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, commonly known as the WIC Program, is administered by FNS and makes available infant formula to low income WIC participants who do not breastfeed. Approximately 50 percent of babies born in the United States each year participate in the WIC Program. The Program issues infant formula to about 2 million infants each month.

Parents who have questions concerning infant feeding are encouraged to contact their pediatrician. USDA/FNS will continue to maintain close contact with FDA and rely on FDA for safety information concerning melamine in infant formula. USDA is committed to ensuring that babies receive safe and nutritious food.

More information on melamine can be found on the FDA website, at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/melamra4.html>. Information about the WIC program is available on the Food and Nutrition Service website, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov>.

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