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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

IN RE: Dkt. No.:FSIS-03-0000
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEAT AND POULTRY
INSPECTION MEETING

Meeting held on the 24th day of June, 2003
at 8:30 a.m.
Hilton Hotel
1767 King Street
Alexandria, VA

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

BEFORE: MR. ROBERT TYNAN

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P R O C E E D I N G S

June 24, 2003

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2
3 DR. McKEE: Well, welcome back. And I
4 appreciate all the hard work that you did last night. I
5 know it's intense, and the evenings get long when you've
6 got some weighty topics to work on. So, again, thank
7 you very much. What I'd like to do this morning, if we
8 could, is to go through our three sub-committees, and
9 then after lunch we'll have some follow-up briefings.
10 But I'm anxious to really hear the comments of the
11 committee to address the three very important topics
12 that the Agency is interested in. We have the documents
13 passed out, but what I'll do is, hopefully, you'll have
14 a spokesperson that can talk for your committee and go
15 through the information that you came up with in your
16 report. The first sub-committee group was to address
17 delivery of training. Is there a spokesperson for --
18 okay, Dr. Denton.

19 DR. DENTON: Thank you, Dr. McKee. Before we
20 get into the substance of this I would like to take the
21 opportunity to thank the committee. Gladys Bayse, Mike
22 Kowalcyk, Deanna Baldwin and Charles Link. Very
23 congenial group. I think we have a lot of passion for
24 the issue, education and training. And because everyone
25 was anxious to get into the meat of it, we actually had

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1 some pretty wide-ranging discussions, but we'll try to
2 make some organization to that. I'd also like to take
3 this opportunity to thank Drs. McKee and Dr. Kelly for
4 their obvious commitment to the issue of education and
5 training of the workforce within the Agency. We think
6 that that is a key element that is really going to
7 assist the Agency in becoming the type of agency that
8 you desire as a public health agency. I'd also like to
9 thank the staff. They worked very hard with us in
10 trying to capture the essence of what we were talking
11 about. The questions that we were given are two. What
12 feedback do we have with regard to the objectives that
13 were outlined for the delivery of training and
14 education? And what we did is try to take those six
15 stated goals in sequence and address those, and then --
16 and pull back out any specific recommendations that we
17 might have. Now, overall, we think that all six goals
18 are appropriate with regard to the stated objectives of
19 what the Agency would desire to become. We did have
20 some suggestions that we thought could strengthen those
21 goals. And as we move down through goal number one, we
22 have briefly stated that goal, which is to strengthen
23 the public health scientific and technical skills of the
24 workforce. We, essentially, dealt with two primary
25 needs with regard to the clientele that would be

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1 receiving the education and training. One of these is
2 for new hires. The other is for the continuing
3 education needs of current employees. Those being very
4 straight forward. We also identified two kinds of
5 training that we think are important. One is the
6 theoretical or the underlying principles of what we're
7 trying to teach, and then the practical application of
8 those principles. We think that's a very key element
9 within that. We also encourage the use of joint
10 education and training as appropriate with FSIS, the
11 other federal agencies, states, consumers and industry.
12 And one thing that you'll probably hear mentioned
13 several times as we go down through this is the use of
14 multiple sources of education and training programs so
15 that we're not putting the Agency in the position of
16 having to reinvent educational materials. That,
17 probably, is going to be of significant benefit because
18 we know that cost of delivery of this is one of the
19 overarching issues that we have to work within. Goal
20 number two. Enhance the ability of the workforce to
21 protect meat, poultry and egg products from intentional
22 harm. We completely agree with that. What we think
23 might be added to strengthen that is to add the known
24 security and safety concepts regarding Homeland Security
25 without diverting resources from the traditional mission

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1 of the Agency. Here we're making the distinction
2 between the intentional contamination of the food supply
3 as opposed to the unintentional that we're trying to
4 prevent through our normal activities. Goal three.
5 Make training and education accessible at the work site.
6 Dr. Kelly did a great job of capturing the essence of
7 the regional concept. The dependence or reliance upon
8 distance education avenues to deliver that. We think
9 that there is probably still some need for centralized
10 control of educational content, so that the message is
11 consistent from district to district and to all
12 stakeholders within that educational experience. That,
13 I think, is going to result in a higher quality
14 educational experience. Goal number four. Improve
15 training for managers. We had several things that we
16 talked about there. We've tried to pare those down as
17 best we can. We think that it is important to bring in
18 more people that possess managerial and technical skills
19 as part of the original hire. That will help in
20 elevating the overall skill level of the managers within
21 the Agency. That doesn't mean that we abandon those
22 that are already there. We believe that mentoring,
23 training and coaching those within the Agency who are
24 capable, who are on the rise, so to speak, to develop
25 managerial skills to help replace those who are going to

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1 retire. We understand that the eligibility of a number
2 of the senior people within the Agency is going to
3 become an issue in the very near future. We also
4 believe that building and training with a well defined
5 career path and career ladder associated with a job
6 description so that there is an expectation on the part
7 of the employee as they come into the Agency that they
8 should pursue an educational track that will result in
9 them being able to advance their careers within the
10 Agency. We talked about rotational assignments within
11 the Agency. That is going to be beneficial to anyone
12 who is going to be put into a managerial role. We
13 encourage the continued use of that particular tool.
14 And again, the use of multiple sources of education and
15 training programs that will address this particular
16 need. Goal number five. Maintain and improve training
17 and infrastructure. We believe that there need to be
18 established incentives for continuing to learn. And not
19 just the financial reward of having the educational
20 experience provided or for the financial reward for
21 promotion, but a recognition and reward for successful
22 completion of education and training. This has always
23 proven to be a beneficial activity with us in our
24 educational experiences in the academic world, and we
25 think that similar types of things will also be

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1 beneficial for the workforce within FSIS. With regard
2 to obtaining external input for agency training needs,
3 an assessment if you will, from states and other
4 stakeholders that will allow the strengthening and
5 improvement of that training and infrastructure within
6 the Agency is also a desirable thing to try to do under
7 this particular goal. And, finally, goal six. We have
8 a response to emerging and specialized needs. We feel
9 like that specialized trainers specifically dealing with
10 issues that may become addressed in new policies,
11 procedures and regulations would be a very advantageous
12 way to deal with that without regard to whether that
13 expertise is within the Agency or someone from a third
14 party that might be able to provide the level of
15 education with regard to any particular new issue. In
16 addressing the final part of question number one, will
17 achieving the stated objectives help FSIS become a
18 public health agency that is a model for other public
19 health institutions? We believe that the answer to that
20 is yes. Now, I would be happy to stop and let everyone
21 have input into that first question, or if you would
22 prefer, I can go ahead and address the second question,
23 and then throw the floor open to you.

24 DR. MCKEE: Let's address that question now,
25 if you would.

1 DR. DENTON: Okay. I would ask our committee
2 if there's anything that I have overlooked or omitted
3 that is key in our discussions last night.

4 DR. McKEE: I had one question. Did the
5 committee have any dialogue about -- you mentioned that
6 centralized FSIS control of education content should be
7 consistent from one district to another. How -- can you
8 tell us a little bit more about that comment?

9 DR. DENTON: Okay. As we were talking about
10 the delivery of educational materials on a regional
11 basis, obviously, within each region there may be a
12 different set of players with regard to delivering that
13 particular program. What we are striving for there is
14 uniformity of the content of that material so that there
15 is some check and balance with regard to who may be
16 delivering that. For example, there may be one
17 university in one region that has faculty that would
18 become engaged with the Agency as part of that delivery
19 mechanism. Another university within another region.
20 So it's more an attempt to harmonize the message across
21 all of the regions and districts.

22 DR. McKEE: Would a consortium be part of that
23 model, or is that what you're thinking of, or not
24 necessarily?

25 DR. DENTON: It could be. That's one option.

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1 I think that makes a lot of sense, to do it that way.

2 DR. McKEE: Okay. Yes.

3 DR. LEECH: In that line -- Irene Leech. I
4 wondered whether control was a really strong word in an
5 educational kind of a concept, and given with a review
6 might be something you all were thinking about. And
7 again, I know you want harmonized message, but I didn't
8 know whether control, from the standpoint of that can
9 take a long process to get real specific with that, so
10 that struck me as a possible adaptation there.

11 DR. DENTON: Okay. That's an appropriate
12 suggestion. Have us -- everyone else be?

13 DR. McKEE: Was there any...

14 DR. DENTON: Oh, excuse me.

15 DR. McKEE: Oh, I'm sorry. Dr. Harris.

16 DR. HARRIS: Joe Harris. Under goal five, on
17 where you talked about establishing incentives beyond
18 just promotions or financial incentives, what other
19 types of incentives did the sub-committee envision might
20 be useful? Was there any discussion on that?

21 DR. DENTON: We had several thoughts about
22 that. Certificates, public recognition, awards type of
23 things so that they're recognized as having been
24 participating in educational programs that are
25 successful. Particularly those that would be linked to

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1 that career ladder, more or less tying it to a
2 promotion.

3 DR. HARRIS: And I guess this may be more of a
4 question. I know in the Consumer Safety Officer
5 Training, which has been one of the more recent training
6 endeavors of the Agency, one of the components of that
7 was actually the participants receive college credits
8 for participating. Is that something that the Agency
9 would envision as a legitimate incentive for the
10 workforce?

11 DR. DENTON: Yes, we're looking into that.
12 We're very interested in trying to have that as part of
13 the long-range career growth within the Agency. That
14 would be an added incentive in addition to providing the
15 training, but also some college credit so they can start
16 working toward that to apply there. The military has
17 done an excellent job at being able to develop
18 strategies for that with associate level colleges and
19 universities to give an associate degree for basic
20 technical training. So we are interested in pursuing
21 that, that possibility.

22 DR. McKEE: Dr. Hollingsworth?

23 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: My question overlaps a
24 little bit with Joe's, but I notice here, you did talk
25 about multiple sources of education and training, and I

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1 wondered first if you actually talked about allowing
2 employees to work either through offsite types of
3 degreed programs, where they would actually be working
4 toward a degree, an advanced degree at the college
5 level. Also, and a number of years ago, a long time
6 ago, there was a program at FSIS where, similar to the
7 military program, where an employee could actually leave
8 service, get their degree, or work on their degree part
9 time, and then come back, but then they owed the
10 institution so many years of service. And I know when I
11 was in veterinary school, that was a program where a
12 number of veterinarians had their college education,
13 their vet school paid for, and then they went and worked
14 for the Agency to pay that back. I think that that
15 might be something that the Agency should look at, not
16 just for veterinarians, but for any kind of advance
17 degree program. I didn't know if you'd talked about
18 that or not.

19 DR. DENTON: Yes, that's a very good point.
20 We did talk about that at length. And we saw three,
21 maybe four different routes that we could go there. One
22 would be the traditional continuing education
23 experience. The second would be a certification type
24 program in which college credit can be obtained either
25 at the undergraduate level or the graduate level for the

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1 educational experience. And, finally, probably what we
2 see as being the most desirable of all is a graduate
3 level program in which that can be attained while
4 they're working with the Agency. So we've looked at at
5 least those three options. The CEU, the certification
6 for a program, and then the actual degree at the college
7 level. So we're pretty excited about that. That also
8 speaks just a bit, if I can find it, where we talked
9 about tying the -- is it under goal five? No. I would
10 -- well, beg your pardon. It's under question two, is
11 where we addressed the issue that you talked about in
12 which the Agency has paid for educational experience,
13 that there is then a reciprocal commitment on the part
14 of the employee to stay within the Agency for a
15 specified length of time. And we think that's a very
16 key element in the incentive process. Dr. Leech?

17 DR. LEECH: Irene Leech. I think that you can
18 just expand on all that. There could be a graduate
19 program that was created through either a university or
20 a consortium of universities. Also, there's an awful
21 lot of things. There are a lot of things happening
22 related to distance learning, and that doesn't mean just
23 getting stuff by satellite or whatever. But there are a
24 lot more ways to interact. And you could have a
25 combination with some two-week intensive kinds of things

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1 and some other horizons, so there are a lot of models
2 out there that I think could help you to get to where
3 you want to get. But the other thing, yesterday
4 certification programs were mentioned, and I think as
5 you -- I mean, certainly, there's some things you can do
6 internally to create certificates and so forth. But I
7 think if you're truly interested in something that's a
8 recognized certificate, that gets to be an expensive
9 proposition to have it truly be seen as something that's
10 stand alone and valuable. But that may be worth
11 exploring with some of the professional organizations.
12 Again, a group of folks or whatever, so that you have
13 some reason for people to do ongoing. Not just get a
14 degree, but then have reasons to keep certification and
15 to want to have a certain amount of ongoing continuing
16 education. So I heard those things yesterday, and I
17 didn't -- I suspect you all had some of that
18 conversation in the committee. I think that's worth
19 exploring in the future.

20 DR. DENTON: You're right, Irene. There's a
21 lot that was in that discussion that didn't make it to
22 the final report. Mr. Govro. Excuse me.

23 MR. GOVRO: Yes. Our agency has a program of
24 reimbursing our employees for college courses that are
25 related to their field of work, with a prior approval of

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1 the course and demonstration of having passed the course
2 at the end. We do a reimbursement. I'm wondering if
3 the Agency has a similar program.

4 DR. DENTON: We do have a similar program, but
5 I would be interested in your comments about how you do
6 the selection. Ours has been not structured very well
7 as to who might be able to participate. Is there
8 criteria, or how do you go about making your selection
9 as to who will be able to participate?

10 MR. GOVRO: It's wide open. Any employee that
11 wants to pursue a college course that we feel would be
12 beneficial to their line of work, or even perhaps the
13 direction that they're heading in their career path, we
14 consider those on a one-and-one basis.

15 DR. DENTON: Are those usually -- ours has,
16 for the problem we had, has been budget related. Is --
17 has that been an issue for...

18 MR. GOVRO: No.

19 DR. DENTON: ...your situation?

20 MR. GOVRO: It's actually not a widely used
21 program, at least in our division. And, perhaps, that's
22 because everyone who works in our division already has a
23 degree. I don't know to what extent it's utilized in
24 other divisions, where degrees are not required for that
25 work.

1 DR. DENTON: Do they get administrative leave
2 to take anything during the day, or does it have to be
3 all evening classes?

4 MR. GOVRO: We haven't dealt with that issue.
5 Our field personnel, our sanitarians, work on flexible
6 schedules, so we would be inclined to give them the
7 freedom to get away for a class if they could do the
8 work at another time.

9 DR. DENTON: I see. Dr. Leech?

10 DR. LEECH: In Virginia, Cooperative Extension has
11 set up a program and, yes, there are extreme budgetary
12 constraints on that. And all of the employees have a
13 bachelor's degree when they come in, but they are, in
14 order to make it to be -- you know, there's a career
15 ladder there. They come in, and in order to make steps
16 that are somewhat similar to the tenure process, but not
17 exactly the same, they need to get a master's degree.
18 And so they have a period of time. And so those
19 employees that are below that level have the first
20 priority to get the continuing education dollars. If
21 there's some left over, then some of the others who may
22 be moving toward wanting some other kinds of education,
23 or some help to do something more specialized, then
24 those decisions are made. But they are -- any employee
25 is eligible, but then they do go through a process where

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1 the managers in the organization make some decisions
2 about what the priorities are. They also have been able
3 to, in some program areas, get some dollars that people
4 can competitively compete for the opportunity to do some
5 sort of continuing education. Usually a course, or
6 participate in a conference, or something of that
7 nature. And so, simply being selected for that becomes
8 a way of some recognition in addition to the fact that
9 they're getting some continuing education. So there's a
10 combination in that model of the kinds of factors that
11 have been mentioned already.

12 DR. McKEE: Dr. Lee? Or Dr. Jan?

13 DR. JAN: Yeah, Lee Jan, Texas Department of
14 Health. I just want to mention that Texas Department of
15 Health had a similar program, but budgetary constraints
16 came in, and about a year or two ago they -- they didn't
17 disband, but they said, right now we have no more money.
18 So they did stop that. So it was based on budget. We
19 managers were expected to work with the employees that
20 were trying to get an education, or further their
21 education, whether it be a master's or second -- I mean
22 a graduate level, or working toward a bachelor's.
23 Either case, a manager was expected to flex the schedule
24 of that employee as much as they can so they could go to
25 some daytime classes. And there has been some problem

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1 with that, so I think I would have -- recommend that you
2 look closely at how that impacts an employee's EEO
3 rights or civil rights, those issues. Because there was
4 one situation where an employee was not available to the
5 program, and the program was required to just suck it
6 up. And because it was a -- it was kind of a concern
7 about a discrimination claim or some impairment on their
8 civil rights, not letting them go to school. And so
9 those things can be, and I guess it depends on how
10 liberal the Agency is or, you know, or how they view
11 those civil rights versus employers' rights. But I do
12 know that they had a problem, problem with that, and if
13 I am correct, I'm pretty sure that there was -- there is
14 no requirement in Texas that if you participate in this
15 program that you stay with the Agency. You can
16 graduate, and then move on. And I think that was a
17 solution for this particular case, because it wasn't a
18 best employee anyway. So they were glad for that person
19 to leave, but they weren't -- they weren't bound, or she
20 wasn't bound to stay with the program. So -- and I
21 think that was because there might have been some -- I
22 think she signed a contract, maybe, but otherwise, you
23 know, our employees aren't prisoners, and we can't hold
24 them if they don't want to stay. I think that was the
25 idea.

1 DR. McKEE: Dr. Elfering?

2 DR. ELFERING: Yes, Kevin Elfering from
3 Minnesota. We have kind of a -- we get pretty inventive
4 with some of the things that we do at times. We do
5 allow inspection personnel to take a college course if
6 it's within the -- correlates to the job. We don't have
7 any dollars at all for paying tuition, but we do allow
8 them time off from work to take the class. Another
9 thing that we've done is I have an adjunct appointment
10 at the University of Minnesota, so in lieu of payment
11 for me, they give us scholarships. Now, we also have a
12 program and some Masters of Public Health. I believe
13 even some FSIS employees were - I know that they
14 attended just this couple of weeks ago, and there are
15 some scholarships available through the university for
16 that also. So I think there really are some pretty good
17 opportunities to be able to do some things without even
18 having to have a lot of additional budget dollars.

19 DR. McKEE: We have initiated, in our field
20 operations, the ability to bring on an intern in the
21 veterinary area to work in the summertime as an intern
22 situation, and that has worked as a recruiting tool.
23 Plus it's an opportunity for those folks to get some
24 education and training. Hopefully, they'll come to work
25 for us. So that's been one of the strategies we've done

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1 here in the Agency as well. So you're right. There's a
2 lot of opportunities. We haven't been able to access
3 all of them for sure. Any other comments or questions?

4 Yes, Dr. Denton.

5 DR. DENTON: There is one element that I failed
6 to mention, and it impacts goals four and five. I think
7 overarching in all of that activity with regard to
8 improvement for training and improvement for
9 infrastructure, the goal is the retention of very highly
10 qualified and skilled employees. That's a key component
11 that will help in replacing.

12 DR. McKEE: Move to question number two now?

13 DR. DENTON: Yes, please. The second question
14 is what other suggestions do you have about delivering
15 training and education. The first one, we believe that
16 it's important to incorporate rigor into the education
17 and training programs to ensure that the goals of the
18 Agency are met with regard to elevating the status to a
19 public health agency. We've already spoken just briefly
20 about the fact that education provided by the Agency
21 should require a reciprocal commitment from the employee
22 with time and service, particularly where the investment
23 is made in something in the nature of an advanced
24 degree. And then the third one, this is more from our
25 experience as teachers and faculty. Assessing the

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1 employee's educational background to ensure that the
2 employee receives training at the appropriate level with
3 an expectation of success for participating in that
4 educational experience. In other words, we don't want
5 to slot them in too high, where they can't succeed at
6 what they're trying to do. Nor do we want to put
7 someone who is very well qualified in at a level that's
8 too low.

9 DR. McKEE: Okay, any other comments or
10 questions? Dr. Johnson?

11 DR. JOHNSON: Alice Johnson, National Turkey
12 Federation. We talked about this a little bit in our
13 working group last night from the state perspective, and
14 I'm going to bring it up from the industry perspective.
15 Any time the Agency does training, here in the past
16 they've done a really good job of allowing industry an
17 opportunity to attend like a mini session or, you know,
18 have a period after the main training session for a
19 couple hours to allow industry to come in and get some
20 sort of feel for what the training was about. And I
21 think that I'd like to see this group actually put that
22 down as another suggestion so that the Agency maintains
23 that. I think it's been very valuable, particularly
24 when there are new policies and procedures coming out,
25 for the industry to have access to the training

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1 material, and even time to talk with officials about
2 that. I know that the state folks had some concerns
3 last night in some of our discussions about being sure
4 that the state guys get access to all the training
5 materials. Now, I'm looking. Irene is showing me the
6 joint educational training. And I'm looking at that a
7 little differently than, you know, just ability to see.
8 The joint training, I consider to be everybody sitting
9 in the same room, and we all would understand that there
10 are times the Agency does training on policies and
11 procedures, that it's probably not -- we don't need to
12 be on every comment, every step, but just kind of the
13 overview. And maybe that's covered under the joint.

14 DR. DENTON: That's what we're striving for in
15 that particular part of the statement. But I agree with
16 you that there sometimes, for whatever reason, policy
17 issues that we probably aren't going to be engaged in
18 that. But it is a key thing that we think needs to be
19 encouraged.

20 DR. MCKEE: Okay, great. I want to thank you
21 very much. It's a good report, excellent ideas and
22 commentary. Do we want to go into the next sub-
23 committee?

24 MR. TYNAN: Are there changes to the basic
25 report that we need to make as we're going, or are we

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1 reasonably comfortable where we are with this report
2 now?

3 DR. DENTON: I think there is some change with
4 regard to goal three. Under the term centralized
5 control, I think maybe review is a more appropriate
6 term.

7 DR. McKEE: That's under goal three, Joe?

8 DR. DENTON: Is that acceptable terminology?
9 Oh, they did. Okay. I'm sorry. You're fast. Did it
10 so quickly I didn't even see it.

11 DR. McKEE: Yes, Mr. Govro.

12 MR. GOVRO: Yes, just one more comment. Under
13 goal four, you've listed use of multiple sources of
14 education and training programs. Does -- is that
15 driving at providing training at different locations
16 through different means, such as the internet, CD ROM
17 type of training, and things that have not traditionally
18 been used by the Agency?

19 DR. DENTON: Yes.

20 MR. GOVRO: Okay.

21 DR. DENTON: That was discussed at great
22 length. The fact that we have flexibility in the
23 mechanism of delivery.

24 DR. JOHNSON: We're working on a bullet over
25 here to maybe address the difference between what I

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1 consider joint educational opportunities, and then the
2 opportunity for an overview. And Dr. Leech has come up
3 with something that looks pretty good here. Provide
4 opportunities for overview training for those outside
5 FSIS, especially on policy issues. Could we maybe
6 include that as a probably best served under other
7 suggestions?

8 MS. CUTSHALL: The language as of right now?

9 DR. JOHNSON: Yeah. We just happen to have a
10 copy handy.

11 MS. CUTSHALL: Thank you.

12 DR. JOHNSON: You're welcome. Thank you.

13 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Oh, Jill Hollingsworth,
14 SMI. The other thing, too, that I'd like to suggest is
15 that under goal five, where we discussed incentives, I
16 think it might enhance the report if we put some
17 examples there. I think as it is now, it kind of leaves
18 you guessing, what could that be. And I think maybe
19 some examples, such as CU units, or college credits, or
20 even advanced degrees, might help clarify the kinds of
21 incentives that we're talking about there.

22 MS. CUTSHALL: Jill, would you see that going
23 under two of the subset because I think three notes the
24 CEU, the payback for degree, and the work for degree
25 while continuing to work? Were those the kinds of

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1 examples you were thinking of?

2 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Yeah, and it could go
3 there. That's fine.

4 MS. CUTSHALL: Okay.

5 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I just think we need to
6 clarify what we mean by incentives. I think,
7 traditionally, people think of promotions or money, and
8 I think it needs to be clear that there's more to life
9 than just that.

10 MS. CUTSHALL: Just to clarify a couple points
11 that you've made, and that comes back to what Jill was
12 mentioning. You also talked about, specifically under
13 goal five, the certificates, awards, public recognition,
14 linking to career ladder, or college credits. Would the
15 committee see that, or the subcommittee see that as a
16 subset under five for explanatory information, or are
17 you comfortable with the way five is now?

18 DR. DENTON: Five is where we discussed most
19 of what's been incorporated there. We simply didn't
20 incorporate all that language. I'm comfortable with it,
21 if the committee -- subcommittee is.

22 MS. CUTSHALL: Okay.

23 DR. MCKEE: John. Dr. Carpenter?

24 DR. CARPENTER: Yeah, Deanna and I were just
25 discussing, as you look at maybe, let's see, maybe goal

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1 four, or maybe other suggestions, personal assessment.
2 How do you go about determining that the skills of
3 individuals who are relatively early or maybe mid career
4 in the Agency are tuned into being good at marketing,
5 being good at people skills, being good at analytical
6 skills, and appropriately guide them with the training
7 of the Agency along those particular lines? So I guess
8 my emphasis is assessment. You know, what kind of tools
9 or instruments might the Agency use to determine
10 individual strengths so that they can -- individuals can
11 be better guided to a particular career path?

12 DR. MCKEE: That is key. Can you speak to
13 that?

14 DR. KELLY: Yes. I can tell you -- this is
15 Karlease Kelly. I can tell you that we do have an
16 assessment tool that we're using as part of our
17 management development activities. It is a 360 degree
18 assessment tool where people get feedback from the folks
19 who report to them, their peers, as well as the people
20 that they report to, or people that they work on
21 projects with. But that is only one -- one tool that
22 we're applying in, you know, in the program. So we can
23 take a look at the possibility of applying other tools
24 to help us in other programs.

25 DR. MCKEE: Thank you. One of the criteria

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1 that I was trying to use within the Agency, and that is
2 the individual's value to the Agency, and how do you
3 determine that, and what kind of technical expertise?
4 And when you set priorities, I think if we can figure a
5 way to factor that kind of a thing in, it will be
6 important for us to try to be able to do that, so that
7 we not only assess the capabilities of the individual
8 requesting it, but also the needs and the assessment of
9 the priorities of the Agency as well. And that's the
10 challenge. That's a good point in that we need to do
11 both ends of that to make that work properly. Anything
12 else? Is that a final document?

13 MR. LINK: Can you see those? Place your hand
14 on there.

15 MR. TYNAN: You're saying the second question?
16 Scroll down to the second question.

17 DR. KELLY: Question two.

18 DR. McKEE: Good to go? Okay, great. Well,
19 thank you very much. Let's give the subcommittee a
20 hand. Okay, we're a little bit ahead of schedule. Do
21 you want -- Rob, would you want to go ahead and start?

22 MR. TYNAN: Sure.

23 DR. McKEE: Let's go ahead and start Sub-
24 Committee Number 2's report, which is Increasing
25 Industry Awareness for Food Security. Who is the

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1 spokesperson for that? Mr. Govro? Okay, would you go
2 ahead and proceed then, please?

3 MR. GOVRO: Actually, I would like to start
4 off express appreciation to the members of FSIS who
5 helped last night with our subcommittee meeting. Jessie
6 and his staff, as well as the other FSIS members who
7 stayed with us fairly late to come up with these answers
8 to the five questions that were posed. I'd also like to
9 thank Dr. Carpenter, Dr. Harris, Dr. Hollingsworth and
10 Ms. Eskin for all their diligent work last night. There
11 were a lot of good ideas bouncing around the room, and
12 we hope that we've captured those adequately. So we
13 have to -- we started with five questions that were
14 posed to the group, and the fifth question was really
15 predicated on the answer to the fourth question, and we
16 ended up combining those. So we just have four
17 questions that we've answered. The first one is how can
18 the Agency improve food security awareness by the
19 industry. I'm going to go ahead and read this and,
20 perhaps, interject as I go along, some of the thoughts
21 of the subcommittee. The Agency should assess the level
22 of awareness by the industry to determine if it needs to
23 do more. We felt that it was difficult to decide what
24 the Agency should do, or how it could improve if it
25 didn't know what that level of awareness was at this

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1 time. The Agency should either attempt to accelerate
2 OMB clearance for making such a survey or make those
3 determinations when doing food security inspections. It
4 was mentioned that doing a survey required some
5 clearance that could make that process very slow. FSIS
6 could also consider using industry organizations to
7 gather that information. The Agency could provide other
8 types of training on food safety issues such as recall
9 preparedness that could improve industry's awareness of
10 the need to implement food security measures. This has
11 been done somewhat successfully in other places such as
12 FDA's joint effort with the Western Association of Food
13 and Drug Officials, to present buyer security food
14 recall workshops. And because the two messages of food
15 safety and food security are somewhat intertwined, the
16 Agency could look for opportunities to tie the food
17 security message into other types of food safety
18 training. And this could either be done in house or in
19 coordination with organizations, as I just mentioned.
20 Given that the two food security guidance documents that
21 we were given yesterday that were produced by FSIS have
22 been reviewed with each plant, and there should be a
23 fair level of awareness of the food security issue,
24 another question might be how the Agency can be sure
25 that every plant dedicates the appropriate level of

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1 resources to food security. We felt that this would
2 require the Agency to hone its message about the threat
3 of bioterrorism and make industry understand the
4 importance of bioterrorism prevention and response
5 preparedness. That if there's any lack of action on the
6 part of industry at this time it may be because there's
7 a lack of understanding of the issue. The Agency should
8 work with other government agencies and industry groups
9 such as states, local agencies, FDA, CDC, the FBI and
10 industry organizations. We get -- the alphabet soup got
11 a little bit too long to list all those. To be prepared
12 to respond to a food bioterrorism event. They could
13 conduct multi-agency, tabletop exercises and, perhaps,
14 even include interested industry members. Could
15 coordinate with other agencies and industry groups to
16 gather good ideas and avoid reinventing the wheel.
17 There was quite a bit of discussion about a number of
18 different groups that have already done things in terms
19 of food security. And what might be appropriate at this
20 point would be to try to consolidate all that
21 information and pull the good ideas together to share
22 them. And also, continue to reach out to other agencies
23 and industry organizations to establish good contact
24 information and working relationships. One of the
25 things we discussed was that the issue of food security

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1 is not just about prevention, but then also response
2 when there is a problem. And response in a major event
3 is certainly going to require that the Agency work with
4 a number of other different agencies and having that
5 good working relationship established ahead of time
6 would be very important. And I think I'll stop there
7 and we can discuss that.

8 DR. McKEE: Okay. Mr. Link?

9 MR. LINK: I haven't said anything for two
10 days. Might as well say something. Just last night in
11 our group discussion we talked about some of these same
12 issues. I'm not real sure why, but it came up. And one
13 of the things that we talked about, when the Agency
14 trained for food security, obviously started in the
15 district levels and working down to the plant level, and
16 to the point of actually getting with the local
17 inspectors to local plant management, pulling in the
18 local police department, whomever, so that they would
19 know how to get in the plant and do things of that sort.
20 And just to one of the points up here of working with
21 the other agencies, I know that I guess it's EPA,
22 through their Process Safety Management Programs or
23 something of this, has already gone through the effort
24 of how do you react if you have an ammonia spill in a
25 plant, for example. What are you going to do? And how

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1 do the emergency react? And they've already been in the
2 plants, and they already know their ways in and ways
3 around. So some of this stuff is already done, to your
4 point. And, you know, maybe it's another alphabet to
5 add up there to the EPA or even OSHA because I know that
6 these things are in place already in a lot of cases.
7 And there's, again, there's no point in bringing them
8 back in because we have another issue. You know, we've
9 already done all that. So it can kind of coordinate
10 with those guys.

11 DR. McKEE: Yes?

12 DR. JAN: I have -- this is Lee Jan from Texas
13 Department of Health. That first paragraph talks about
14 a survey that will make a determination when doing food
15 security inspections. The only time food security
16 inspections are done is during increased threat levels
17 to replace some 04 tasks, which are Other Concealed
18 Protection tasks, and I think there's some ongoing at
19 federal levels. But these are by inspectors who,
20 essentially, have had no training other than maybe
21 looking at a directive or this pamphlet, which is, you
22 know, better than nothing at all. But I think it may be
23 worth considering utilizing, perhaps, the supervisors.
24 At one time supervisors were required to do an annual
25 in-depth review every establishment. Of course, they've

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1 done away with that, or the FSIS has done away with that
2 with the advent of PBIS. But, perhaps, developing a
3 tool for circuit supervisors to use once a year, because
4 also, circuit supervisors have been or will be trained
5 at a fairly high level in biosecurity and bioterrorism
6 issues. One that was mentioned yesterday that I
7 participated in as well. So they have a little more
8 understanding of some of the, maybe how does a terrorist
9 think, and some of those things that are important to
10 help maybe identify. And if they would -- if a tool,
11 based on some of that information and some of these,
12 would be created for supervisors to use maybe annually
13 to give an assessment to the plant, a non-NR-generated
14 type, you know, a no -- no foul/no harm type report to
15 the plant that they can say at least someone looked and
16 helped, you know, showed me that -- where my
17 vulnerabilities might be in my plant, and then if,
18 legally, it's legal to use this information to assess
19 where the industry is in general by bringing this data
20 back. And, you know, I know there's some FOA-type
21 things, and that's one of the reasons the in-depth
22 reviews were stopped, I think, was because of the
23 Freedom of Information Act accessibility and conflicting
24 with PBIS and those kinds of things. So those issues
25 probably have to be addressed, but if that kind of a

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1 tool, to someone who has already had some training in
2 knowing how to look for some of these things, I think
3 would be more effective and, perhaps, it could also be
4 included in the CSO's assessment of -- they're doing S -
5 - HSF and SSOP assessments, but they could possibly, at
6 the end, give them an overview or look at from a -- and
7 again, this maybe would be a non-reportable type result
8 of the status of the food security in each
9 establishment. Those are just some comments.

10 MR. MCKEE: Dr. Hollingsworth?

11 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: To Dr. Jan's point, my
12 understanding when we were writing this was that the
13 holdup with OMB is most likely things like Paperwork
14 Reduction Act issues. And I think what we were trying
15 to say there is if you -- if you can't ask the industry
16 to do it for those reasons, then maybe you can do it
17 yourselves internally. And I see Dr. Jan's point.
18 Perhaps we can reword it to say something about make
19 those determinations using FSIS as well as internal
20 resources. In other words, use your own people, your
21 own employees, using some sort of a checklist or
22 something that doesn't burden the industry; therefore,
23 it doesn't need to go through OMB clearance. And I
24 think that sort of Dr. Jan's point. And I think that is
25 what we meant there. I -- for the rest of the group.

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1 MR. GOVRO: Yes.

2 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I think what we were
3 saying is there's other ways to do it if the OMB route
4 is just too cumbersome.

5 DR. McKEE: Dr. Johnson?

6 DR. JOHNSON: I agree that -- with the
7 discussion about OMB being, you know, it's hard to move
8 things through, and it might limit what you can do. But
9 I think we need to be careful with FSIS going into
10 plants and doing surveys. I know that a lot of times
11 the inspectors have been given tools to go in and do,
12 and because of the fear of not having gone through OMB,
13 the inspectors will be told don't talk to the plant or,
14 you know, this is something you're doing on your own.
15 And a lot of information is not -- not known.
16 Particularly with regard to security issues, it's not
17 something that FSIS folks would normally have access to
18 with regard to personnel records and things like that.
19 So I understand what we're trying to do here, but I
20 think we've got to be careful that FSIS doesn't go into
21 something and assume that the survey information is
22 correct if there hasn't been some interaction with the
23 industry. I think we've had a couple of surveys that
24 have been conducted over the last couple of months that
25 illustrate there's some concern there.

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1 DR. McKEE: Did -- was there any dialogue
2 regarding as to whether there ought to be certain
3 industry that would have security clearances so that
4 dialogue could occur? Has that been thought about?

5 MR. GOVRO: We didn't discuss that in the
6 subcommittee.

7 DR. McKEE: That's something that we've
8 thought about in the Agency as to what the model might
9 be for that and how -- because, you know, we have,
10 because of security clearances and security constraints,
11 and we're in the process now in the Agency to document,
12 you know, what documents need to be classified, and how
13 you share those with people that did to know is an
14 issue. So security clearance is something that the
15 Department and the Agency haven't really dealt with in
16 the past. So that's a wheel we're starting to invent.
17 So we, as industry looks at their Homeland Security
18 efforts, that might be some kind of dialogue that we'll
19 have to have in the future. Any other comments before
20 we go on? Okay, next question.

21 MR. GOVRO: Our second question was should
22 FSIS engage industry and consumer associations to assist
23 in this effort. Industry associations have a vital role
24 to play in ensuring that food plants recognize the
25 importance of measures that address food security.

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1 Along with FSIS, they should assist food plants in
2 implementing security measures that are appropriate for
3 each plant. So, really, the answer to the question was
4 yes. To date, consumer groups have focused on food
5 safety, not food security, and are likely to continue
6 work toward reducing the significant risk to public
7 health posed by microbial contamination of meat and
8 poultry products. And there is some concern among
9 consumer groups that industry and government resources
10 might be diverted from food safety to food security
11 efforts. To the extent that government and industry
12 want to inform and motivate consumers regarding food
13 security issues, they need to respond to these concerns
14 and work to properly allocate and maximize their
15 resources in the areas of food safety and security. So,
16 really, the concern was about the priority of food
17 security, and dealing with that versus continuing to
18 work on food safety, which is perceived to be the more
19 real problem on a day-to-day basis than the potential
20 problem of dealing with food security.

21 DR. McKEE: Any comments or questions?

22 MR. GOVRO: And I might add that we did talk,
23 and I think it mentioned in several of the other
24 answers, on working with different groups, such as
25 Association of Food and Drug Officials and IFP to

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1 jointly work with the industry to deliver the message
2 about food security.

3 DR. McKEE: Yeah, I think that as the thought
4 of Homeland Security and what that really means to us is
5 -- is formed nationally, that that question might be
6 able to be revisited in that I think there is a need to
7 address issues in the food supply with the thinking
8 enemy as opposed to accidental or process contamination.
9 And so there's, clearly, two forks in the road there,
10 and we have to pursue both of them, I think. And if we
11 go back to what the vision of the Agency is, and that's
12 to protect the public health, we have to both of those.
13 And so allocation of resources becomes an issue, but at
14 the same time, it's very important that we understand
15 that the priorities of the events that are occurring are
16 what will drive their budget allocations. So -- any
17 other questions? Number three.

18 MR. GOVRO: Okay. Question number three is
19 should FSIS provide joint training for inspectors and
20 industry? This is an area where industry often has more
21 knowledge and experience than the Agency. Rather than
22 training, FSIS should encourage an information sharing
23 approach. And you'll notice we put training in
24 quotation marks there. And we did that, I think, not
25 because we want to say that training should not be

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1 undertaken by the Agency, but that training in the
2 traditional sense might not be the most effective way to
3 address this issue. The sharing of information will
4 lead to identification of better practices. Large
5 companies have a clearer understanding of security and
6 vulnerabilities within their businesses than small
7 operators. They also have more resources to devote to
8 security. The food industry is willing to share
9 information about best practices regarding security. It
10 was -- someone mentioned that there had been a
11 conference where an information sharing session had
12 taken place, and it was very useful to the industry to
13 hear the ideas of others who had dealt with the problem.
14 And the group thought that that would be a good way to
15 get the message out to the industry to hear it from one
16 another. In a conference setting, information can be
17 pooled and shared, benefiting both large and small
18 companies. FSIS should provide the opportunity for
19 industry and regulators to learn from each other. Small
20 companies perceive less security risk for themselves and
21 struggle with the cost/benefits of security measures.
22 Not all small operators will be able to participate in
23 conferences. In this case, FSIS should disseminate the
24 information. FSIS can further use this information to
25 provide awareness to the inspection workforce using

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1 existing programs like LEARN Corporation. The role of
2 FSIS should be to bring together industry, states and
3 federal regulators for information sharing, serve in
4 consulting role for small companies, disseminate
5 security information, and motivate the industry to
6 recognize the need for security measures. We talked a
7 little bit about some training that was delivered where
8 the Twin Towers 9/11 tape was shown as an opener, and it
9 was very effective in refocusing everyone's attention on
10 the problem and helping them to remember that this is an
11 important and present issue. Another thing that was
12 mentioned was the legal liability issues, and how
13 effectively Marler Clark, the law firm that makes its
14 living by suing food companies over food-borne illness,
15 they make a rather convincing presentation about the
16 need for companies to exercise great control in their
17 food processes. And I've seen this presented a number
18 of times, and it's really riveting when they present the
19 food companies what it's going to be like when their
20 company is on the -- on the burner, so to speak, and
21 being sued, and how effectively they can convince jurors
22 that they have not done their due diligence in
23 protecting their food supply. And those types of things
24 can be very effective in getting people to focus on the
25 problem. And that I think is all of number three.

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1 DR. McKEE: Any questions or comments on
2 question number three? Yes.

3 MR. SCHAD: Mark Schad. I just have a comment
4 on a couple of sentences there. On the statement,
5 "Large companies have a clear understanding of security
6 and vulnerabilities within their businesses than small
7 operators," this, my personal opinion, speaking as a
8 small processor, I'm not necessarily sure that's the
9 case. I think it's more like each operator would just
10 know his plant the best. And I don't think whether it's
11 large or small would make much of a difference there.

12 MR. GOVRO: Okay, I -- the comment was put
13 there because there was discussion about large companies
14 having the resources and many of them have engaged
15 private security companies, and availed themselves of
16 real professional expertise and advice. And that's
17 usually not a resource that's available to small
18 companies. But...

19 MR. SCHAD: Okay. And the other point I want
20 to make there, "Small companies perceive less security
21 risk." I think that's a true statement. The
22 cost/benefit thing, I'm not sure that's that big a deal
23 for small processors because what I do is I just do a --
24 I hire ADT to do a security system, and it's 40 or 50
25 bucks a month.

1 MR. GOVRO: Um-hum.

2 MR. SCHAD: And that pretty well does the job.
3 So I'm not sure it's a -- as far as cost/benefit, I'm
4 not sure it's a greater cost per benefit thing for small
5 processors to large processors. Just a few comments
6 there.

7 DR. MCKEE: As the Chair, do you -- are you
8 suggesting changes, or want to change, or I'll let that
9 up to your committee?

10 MR. GOVRO: I don't know. Does anybody else -
11 - Joe?

12 DR. HARRIS: Joe Harris. I would suggest, in
13 light of that comment, back up there where it was
14 talking about the large companies, and Mark's first
15 comment, that we could just insert the word may before
16 clear. May -- excuse me, before have. Large companies
17 may have a clearer understanding of security, then that
18 sort of -- okay, would that address your concern there,
19 Mark? And...

20 MR. SCHAD: That's fine.

21 MR. GOVRO: Let's see. In the last paragraph,
22 insert the word some before the word small in the first
23 sentence there.

24 MS. ESKIN: Or just the word struggle because
25 he's saying that, yes, small companies perceive them.

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1 Let's put some before struggle. Just put some before
2 struggle, not before small.

3 MR. GOVRO: Okay.

4 MS. ESKIN: Because you had said they do have
5 it.

6 MR. GOVRO: There we go.

7 MS. ESKIN: That would...

8 MR. GOVRO: Yeah, we certainly didn't mean
9 that as an indictment of small companies and their level
10 of concern. Perhaps more with their ability to,
11 financially or whatever, address those issues.

12 DR. MCKEE: Okay, any other questions or
13 comments on number three? Do you want to go on to --
14 oh, I'm sorry.

15 DR. LEECH: Irene Leech. I wonder if it might
16 be useful to include, particularly in the conference
17 settings for this kind of thing, some other
18 stakeholders. Particularly, some of the key consumer
19 leaders, having them, us, a part of the conversation
20 could be helpful in terms of the public visions of
21 confidence and that kind of thing. So I know this was
22 aimed particularly at inspectors and industry, but in
23 some of those situations, I think it might be worthwhile
24 to include some other folks too.

25 DR. MCKEE: Mr. Govro?

1 DR. LEECH: I was really thinking for industry
2 where Moshe's got it, his cursor would probably work.
3 You could put consumer leaders, or you could use a word,
4 a stakeholder word, the word stakeholders for industry.
5 For stakeholders, yeah. You could do that, and then you
6 could think about what the appropriate folks were in
7 each situation. For stakeholders and regulators, you
8 could leave the regulators, I think. And, similarly,
9 you know, when you got the role down there, role of
10 FSIS, at the bottom, you might just, you know, kind of
11 remember that, you know, there may be some consumer
12 types or others who maybe should be included in some
13 situations.

14 DR. HARRIS: Could we just stakeholders there
15 as well?

16 DR. LEECH: He's good.

17 MR. GOVRO: Stakeholders?

18 DR. LEECH: Yes.

19 MR. GOVRO: Stakeholders and regulators?

20 DR. LEECH: Yes.

21 DR. MCKEE: Dr. Jan?

22 DR. JAN: Lee Jan, Texas Department of Health.
23 I wonder if you make this a conference setting, and you
24 invite stakeholders and regulators to learn from each
25 other, if some of those stakeholders may be potential

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1 terrorists that are trying to find out more about the
2 vulnerabilities that they could -- should take advantage
3 of in some of these establishments, so I would be a
4 little concerned about making a conference, and to then
5 discuss vulnerabilities to our food supply in a public
6 setting. And if you limit it to industry and
7 regulators, at least you've got control of who's getting
8 this information. I know these are not secret meetings
9 and they're all -- but the more difficult you make it to
10 some of these individuals, I think the better it is.

11 DR. McKEE: Yeah, hence my comment about the
12 security of industry. I mean how do you have that
13 dialogue if you're going to talk about -- I mean that's
14 -- that hasn't been addressed as to how you go there.
15 And we'll have to have that, I think, in the comments in
16 the future.

17 MR. GOVRO: We did talk about possibly pre-
18 registration, exclusion of the media, that sort of
19 thing. And no matter what the Agency does with regard
20 to this subject, it's going to have to be careful to not
21 let the information get into the wrong hands.

22 DR. McKEE: Right. Dr. Leech.

23 DR. LEECH: Also you notice about the key
24 leaders. I wasn't speaking of broad public, and that's
25 a part of it. I was talking of having some -- some

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1 controls and having, again, establishing trust all
2 around. I mean I think you've got to have some ground
3 rules and some ways that those go, but I think excluding
4 particular groups could cause other kinds of problems.

5 MR. TYNAN: Is there a way you want to change
6 that language then to make...

7 DR. LEECH: I think it's a matter of
8 understanding that we're not talking about just being
9 public about it. I mean, and I think -- I think we have
10 better, but if you all think we need to do something
11 about the language, I mean I think this is -- security
12 issues is definitely something we've got to take into
13 consideration. That's not a reason to leave some
14 representatives out.

15 DR. JAN: Maybe legitimate stakeholders, not
16 terrorist stakeholders.

17 DR. LEECH: Okay, does using the word key
18 stakeholders make you more comfortable, Dr. Jan?

19 MR. GORO: I just -- I don't have the right
20 word, and that is concern.

21 DR. LEECH: Yeah. Oh, yeah, I respect that.
22 Jill?

23 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: In an effort not to total
24 word spin this thing to death here, I think that
25 although we discussed a lot of those issues, how would

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1 you control it, who would you invite, would you bring in
2 professional, outside consultants, would you bring in
3 the FBI? I mean all those things were on the table for
4 discussion, and I think we left it this way, fully
5 understanding that it's up to the Agency to actually
6 structure what that conference would look like, who
7 would be invited, how would you run it, do you do one or
8 multiple ones. We just didn't think it was our role to
9 go into the details of how you put a conference
10 together, and who you'd -- who you invite, and how it's
11 orchestrated. Our idea was just to make the point that
12 the sharing of the knowledge that's already out there
13 may be the best bet, as opposed to trying to put
14 together an actual educational training program and just
15 kind of, you know, foresee people's security
16 information. Rather, let them learn from each other.

17 MS. ESKIN: Maybe you can simply add, at the
18 end of the third paragraph, where it said that FSIS
19 should provide the opportunity for stakeholders and
20 regulators to learn for each other, comma, either in a
21 setting or recognizing the need to, maybe comma,
22 recognizing the need to...

23 DR. LEECH: Recognizing security issues or...

24 MS. ESKIN: The need.

25 DR. LEECH: ...the need to...

1 MS. ESKIN: Security. Or maybe recognizing
2 the need to -- I'm concerned that security is too broad
3 here because we're talking about security issues. Maybe
4 confidentiality or...

5 DR. LEECH: Yeah.

6 MS. ESKIN: ...sensitivity or something.

7 DR. LEECH: Right. Yeah, those
8 confidentiality or sensitivity are good words.

9 MS. ESKIN: Recognizing the sensitivity of
10 these issues. The sensitive nature of -- of the
11 security, or the -- well, we could say, of security
12 issues. Or security related information, and that's
13 really what we're talking about, right? Maybe the
14 sensitive nature of security related information. Then
15 that would recognize expressly that we know these are --
16 this is a concern.

17 DR. MCKEE: Okay with you, Mr. Chair?

18 MR. GOVRO: That's good.

19 DR. MCKEE: Any other comments? Is that ready
20 to go? Okay, we'll do number 4, and then break.

21 MR. GOVRO: Question number 4. Should FSIS
22 mandate that plants have a food security plan? If so,
23 should this apply to all plants, or should some be
24 exempt? At this time the subcommittee does not feel
25 FSIS mandated food security plants are the proper way to

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1 address food security. Food security is a concept that
2 lends itself more to collaborative efforts by government
3 and industry rather than a regulatory approach at this
4 time. I think the comment was to mandate it is to --
5 how did we say that? If you want to resist it, mandate
6 it, or something to that effect. To be enforceable,
7 regulatory mandates need measurable outcomes and defined
8 objectives which are not evident in the area of food
9 security. It's difficult to see how an establishment or
10 FSIS would measure the success of a food security plan.
11 Security threats and vulnerabilities are not well
12 defined nor are their relative risks clearly understood.
13 Absence of an incident does not constitute a successful
14 security plan. In addition, the subcommittee, at this
15 time, does not see a one size fits all approach being
16 useful to prevent security threats, which may differ
17 greatly depending on product, location, distribution, or
18 establishment size. The subcommittee believes all
19 plants have a food security responsibility, and the
20 subcommittee does not see exemptions from this
21 responsibility.

22 MR. TYNAN: Questions or comments? A homerun.

23 Ms. Eskin, do you have a comment or were you just...

24 MS. ESKIN: No, no, I just put my -- sorry.

25 DR. MCKEE: You just didn't put your flag

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1 down.

2 DR. McKEE: Okay, is there any other, before
3 we leave subcommittee number two, are there any other
4 questions or comments that we need to address before we
5 take a break and address number three when we get back?
6 Okay, how long a break will we give at this time?

7 MR. TYNAN: Oh, about an hour. I think we're
8 ahead. No, I think we've got -- why don't we take about
9 20 minutes? Twenty minutes.

10 ***

11 [Recess]

12 ***

13 MR. TYNAN: Next subcommittee discussion. But
14 before we engage in that, it -- we made such marvelous
15 good time, we're about 30 to maybe as much as 45 minutes
16 ahead of where we planned on being. If you all are
17 agreeable, what I thought we would try and do is move
18 some of the afternoon briefings to the morning, and
19 perhaps take lunch a little bit later. I have Captain
20 Cindy Pond at the table, so she's going to -- has one of
21 the afternoon briefings. Unfortunately, I have not been
22 able to get in contact with our one o'clock briefer, so
23 good Lord willing, she's on her way, and as soon as she
24 walks in, we'll put her on. So, hopefully, we'll get
25 done early, if you are all agreeable to doing that.

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1 DR. JOHNSON: Yes.

2 MR. TYNAN: Okay, perfect. Okay. I didn't
3 think I would hear any dissenting voices, but we thought
4 we would, in the consensus building spirit, we felt we'd
5 ask first. And with that, I will go out of here and try
6 and get in touch with Barbara O'Brien from our Food
7 Safety Education staff, and I will turn it back over to
8 Dr. McKee maybe to take us through this third
9 subcommittee.

10 DR. MCKEE: Okay, who is the Chair for
11 subcommittee three on state review methods? Dr.
12 Johnson? You may.

13 DR. JOHNSON: Okay, and we sure don't want to
14 do anything to mess up the getting out early part. Do
15 we have subcommittee agreement on that?

16 DR. LEECH: Absolutely.

17 DR. JOHNSON: We have subcommittee agreement.
18 All right. Well, first of all, we, too, want to thank
19 the FSIS technical folks that were with us last night.
20 Roy Sperry, Jane Roth, Ron Hicks and Dr. Leese, as well
21 as Yolanda, who did an excellent job in recording, and
22 Doug, who I don't know how he got everything as fast as
23 we were talking and the way we were going, who was able
24 to facilitate and capture everything for us. And Bernie
25 Shire was in, and was a very strong participant and

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1 provided us a lot of good information as well. I
2 forgot. We got to -- everybody wants to be sure we
3 thank Doug. One of the first questions we were asked
4 was to define at least equal to. And one of the things
5 that the committee talked about before we actually got
6 into the questions regarded a couple of frustrations
7 that we maybe had with regard to the materials received
8 and some of the previous recommendations. One of the
9 comments that we felt we should put on the table this
10 morning is regarding the recommendations from the June
11 5, 2002 meeting, which was actually in our handout
12 material. And that recommendation talked about FSIS
13 reviewing all of the state reviews that had been done
14 since 2000. And I understand that, from Dr. Leech and
15 Jane Roth that the reviews had been completed and that,
16 perhaps, it would be more efficient both resource wise
17 and time wise to go ahead and look at those reviews and
18 the information from those reviews, and to use that
19 information to be presented to Congress as part of the
20 congressional request, and that the information that we
21 are looking at now, as far as the manual, and the
22 questions should address future reviews on the part of
23 the Agency. And there was also some frustration in that
24 some of the materials that had been provided to other
25 groups that are working on this, I think the state

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1 associations had been working through the manual. It
2 might have been appropriate for this committee to have
3 had access to some of that material as well so that,
4 since it is kind of a short timeframe with only two
5 hours to have discussion, it would have been good to see
6 what other groups had done on this and, perhaps, not
7 reinvented the wheel, but maybe come to a better
8 refinement of some of that. Just some suggestions from
9 the committee. Then we decided we'd talk about our
10 questions. And the first one was to define at least
11 equal to. And the definition that -- or I guess what we
12 considered to be probably the mission of these reviews
13 was entitled in the definition of at least to, food
14 safety and consumer protection mission of state programs
15 ensure outcomes that are effective as those achieved
16 through federal programs. We defined outcomes as
17 standards that ensure production of safe, wholesome and
18 properly marked and labeled meat and poultry products.
19 The -- a lot of the discussion centered around the need
20 to focus on the outcome, the safety of the product, as
21 opposed to do they meet the regulations. Do state
22 programs follow regulation by regulation? And it gets
23 back to the whole concept of tell us what you want, and
24 we'll figure out the way to get there. Don't direct us
25 how to get there. You know, the mission for both

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1 states, industry, consumer groups and federal government
2 is safe product. The product of safe and wholesome
3 product. And we recognize that the missions were the
4 same, and the end point the same. It's just how you get
5 there may be different, so there did need to be
6 flexibility recognition of that. So I guess, Dr. McKee,
7 I'll stop and see if there's any comments on that.

8 DR. MCKEE: Any comments or questions? Okay.
9 Good job.

10 DR. JOHNSON: Any comments from our group? We
11 had a lot of fun last night in spite of all the
12 aggravation we probably gave to some of the technical
13 folks. The next question that we had to address were
14 what are the criteria FSIS should use for evaluating
15 each of the ten review components. And if you'll
16 remember, in our briefing paper, during the discussion,
17 they talked about that there would be a review of the
18 ten components, and they were listed, and that the first
19 seven needed to be looked at in light of at least equal
20 to. And remember, we have defined at least equal to now
21 to be outcomes for safe, wholesome and properly marked
22 and poultry -- meat and poultry products. The first
23 criteria was statutory authority and food safety
24 regulations. We looked at the criteria to be that the
25 state program had adapted relevant component sections of

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1 both the Meat and the Poultry Acts and/or appropriate
2 regulations. Here again, there are certain regulations
3 that are just inherent within the state that the state
4 would automatically recognize, but there, just because
5 all the regulations weren't similar to federal, it
6 didn't mean the state program wasn't appropriate. With
7 regard to criteria for inspection, we talked about what
8 was the purpose of inspections. And the purpose of
9 inspection is to assure that the outcome of safe,
10 wholesome and properly marked and labeled meat and
11 poultry products was met. With regard to product
12 sampling requirements, again, product sampling is
13 adequate to verify outcome. And we did talk about
14 product sampling. We -- or I guess, yeah, and looking
15 at a frequency that's appropriate. We talked about
16 statistical validity. And there was a concern that we
17 not bring that -- bring into any kind of set frequency
18 the allotted times to be appropriate with statistical
19 sampling. You just can't afford to do it from either a
20 state or a federal. Federal program as well as
21 industry. We also talked about product sampling not
22 only to include what we normally think of as far as
23 microbiological or analytical sampling, but also to
24 include, you know, just tasks just as weights. Not --
25 kind of get outside the box of sampling being strictly

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1 for microbial concerns, that we did do a lot of
2 analytical with regard to fat samples and assuring
3 labeling compliance. As far as staffing requirements,
4 staffing is sufficient to meet the outcome. Again, the
5 outcome being safe, wholesome and properly marked and
6 labeled meat and poultry products. Dr. Leech said she
7 probably wouldn't accept some of this from some of her
8 students because they pick one good answer and then just
9 repeat it several times. But we think it truly, truly
10 met the intent of what we're -- what we were trying to
11 do. There was a lot of discussing on staffing, and we
12 got into well, the requirements of staffing from the
13 federal standpoint. And I think when we get through
14 with going through the list, we'll get some of the state
15 guys to talk about their concern. Their staffing is
16 appropriate and they're comfortable that product is
17 safe. And they're doing it more on a risk base based on
18 certain criteria, such as the actual risk the product
19 posed to public health. You know, the frequency the
20 plant is in operation, and the volume. I think that was
21 a pretty interesting and useful conversation. As far as
22 humane handling laws and regulations, we did have a
23 little different answer on this one than we have on the
24 previous ones. Most of the discussion centered around
25 the fact that the regulations that FSIS and in the

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1 Humane Slaughter Act follow are appropriate, and that
2 any changes in the state part should be consistent with
3 the Humane Slaughter Act as outlined by the federal
4 government. With regard to other consumer protection
5 regulations, the outcome of consumer protection
6 regulations provide for the properly labeled wholesome
7 products that meet federal product standard. And we did
8 talk a lot about product standard and product identity,
9 and the fact that there are certain policies and federal
10 requirements for what products are called and what they
11 -- how they are processed. And in order for there to be
12 consistency across the country and consumer awareness to
13 be at the level appropriate, that we needed to follow
14 the federal product standards, that it wasn't
15 appropriate for states to try to implement product
16 standards or change product of identity from the federal
17 standards. As far as training. I'm sorry, enforcement
18 of regulations, enforcement tools in place to meet the
19 outcome to be sure that states had the authority they
20 needed. And some of the good discussion, that the fact
21 that it's applied as appropriate. It wasn't enough just
22 for the states to have on their books that they had
23 enforcement capabilities, but that the enforcement was
24 being taken when there was a necessity. And there was a
25 lot of discussion that I think, Kevin, you may want to

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1 chime in after we get through this, that there's
2 disagreement with some of the federal standards, that
3 the states feel like they have a little different way of
4 doing things that work just as well. So applying
5 strictly federal standards and following federal
6 regulations might kind of be cumbersome to the states
7 and keep them from doing what they needed to do as far
8 as meeting the outcome. With regard to training
9 requirements, inspection staff has the knowledge, skill
10 and ability to make determination as to the outcome as
11 to the safety of the product. They understand the
12 authority that they have to enforce the outcome being
13 met, and that state programs have access to FSIS
14 training to ensure the science-based information is
15 consistent. I think the subcommittee may want to
16 discuss that a little bit when we get through. With
17 regard to the civil rights requirements, now if you'll
18 remember, one through seven was -- part of the criteria
19 was to be sure that this was equal to, and the others
20 are, I guess, just an evaluation of how the state
21 performs, and if they are appropriate. With regard to
22 civil rights, federal and state standards must be met
23 and consistently applied in accordance with Title 6.
24 And some of the state folks talked about how, sometimes,
25 there was a perception that the state should be doing

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1 more above and beyond what was required on the part of
2 the federal. As far as funding and financial
3 accountability, the states should provide documentation
4 that allocation of resources complies with the
5 Cooperative Agreement that's signed between FSIS and the
6 state. And the committee also recommended that FSIS re-
7 evaluate funding. There was some thought that state
8 programs should be funded maybe 100 percent by the
9 federal government. So I don't know if Dr. McKee wants
10 to consider that in his budget for next year or not.
11 subcommittee comments?

12 DR. MCKEE: Are there any other questions or
13 discussion? Yes, Ms. Eskin.

14 MS. ESKIN: When these criteria, these ten
15 points, are applied to the state program, how is that
16 going to work? In other words, do you have to pass, you
17 know, eight out of ten, or is it a more subjective? I
18 want to get a better understanding of the actual review
19 process.

20 DR. JOHNSON: Well, I'm assuming that may be
21 something for Jane or some of those folks to answer, but
22 it's my assumption that the states would have to meet,
23 again, be equal to. The outcome would have to be there
24 for each one of these...

25 MS. ESKIN: Okay.

1 DR. JOHNSON: ...in order for them to be
2 considered appropriate. But that may be something Jane
3 or some of the folks working on the manual may want to
4 address.

5 MR. TYNAN: Jane, did you want to come up for
6 a minute?

7 MS. ROTH: I think that's the correct answer.
8 It's sort of what we plan to do is clearly identify
9 criteria and expected outcome for all the ten
10 components, and we would expect the states to meet
11 those.

12 DR. McKEE: Mr. Govro?

13 MR. GOVRO: Yes. Alice, I think you were
14 probably wise to stick with a reliance on measuring
15 outcomes, and given the amount of time you had to work
16 on this question, I don't think you could have gone into
17 any more detail. One of the things I noticed was
18 missing here was any mention of making the measurements
19 -- doing those measurements in such a way that it
20 provides the assurance that the state program is equal
21 to and, therefore, eligible for interstate shipment of
22 products. And I don't know if that's a goal of the
23 agency, or where the resistance to allowing state-
24 inspected meat to be shipped interstate comes from. But
25 I think, if that's the case, it would be appropriate to

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1 determine what kind of outcomes would allow that to
2 happen at some point in the future.

3 DR. JOHNSON: We did. The committee did talk
4 about interstate shipment, and there's a lot of
5 different thoughts and ideas. And we understand there's
6 different -- different thoughts and ideas, and we
7 understand there's different -- different concepts being
8 floated around within FSIS. However, for the sake of
9 what we were asked to do, the subcommittee talked about
10 this outside of the arena of interstate shipment, just
11 looking at the state review and equal to. Now, whether
12 that was appropriate or not, I'll take responsibility
13 that we did that. But it just -- that was the only way
14 we could actually get through the review process, I
15 think, within our timeframe.

16 DR. MCKEE: Dr. Bayse.

17 DR. BAYSE: Yeah, Gladys Bayse. As a
18 biochemist who is more a chemist than a biologist, so
19 I'll direct it to Alice, because she's close by, but
20 under two and three, in inspection and product sampling
21 requirements, I do have a concern. I understand the
22 issue of the microbial concern, but to what extent,
23 either here or elsewhere, maybe it's to Dr. McKee as
24 well, is there preparedness for looking at chemical
25 adulteration as opposed to microbiological?

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1 DR. JOHNSON: And I'll just -- the
2 subcommittee did talk about product sampling to be
3 expanded beyond micro and to look at analytical chemical
4 substance even, you know, economic adulteration as far
5 as fat sampling and things like that. And if the
6 subcommittee wants to say anything else, or, Dr. McKee,
7 you want to.

8 DR. MCKEE: Yeah, we do have a program where
9 we check for the labeling requirements, and that's one
10 of the main focus of our chemical testing. Yes, Dr.
11 Jan?

12 DR. JAN: In the normal course of operations,
13 chemical hazards are -- are considered in every step of
14 every operation, as well in micro sample -- micro
15 hazards. So, although we may not test for say presence
16 of a chemical that should have been a cleaning chemical,
17 or something like that, on a routine basis, the hazard
18 analysis will address that, and the plants, SSOB and has
19 a plan to identify. And if there's a hazard likely to
20 occur, they're going to be related to a chemical, then
21 it's plant responsibility to take whatever control
22 measures are to prevent that from occurring. And then
23 based on their hazards identified, we may or may not
24 take samples. But it's to take routine samples for
25 chemicals other than -- well, one of the chemicals that

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1 frequently can be a concern is nitrites. And if
2 nitrites are used and are used in a pure form, then
3 there's a hazard probably reasonably likely to occur,
4 we'd expect some controls put in place by the plant, and
5 we may test for nitrites. Most plants actually use
6 what's called prague powder or some other formulation.
7 It's a mixture of salt and nitrites. And it's almost
8 impossible to have a powerful product and -- that has
9 exceeded a safe level of nitrites. So it's kind of a --
10 that particular chemical is kind of a built-in check or
11 prevention. But chemicals then that we might be thinking
12 about, in particular, in today's concern with food
13 security for intentional tampering, you know, we nor
14 FSIS have a program to routinely test for those kinds of
15 adulterants. We try to protect it in some other method
16 either through SSOPs or through the hazard analysis.

17 DR. BAYSE: So I guess we're really looking at
18 after the fact, and then identifying whatever.

19 DR. JAN: Well, with HACCP, it's before the
20 fact.

21 DR. BAYSE: Right, but I mean...

22 DR. JAN: But, yeah...

23 DR. BAYSE: ...for intentional, would be after
24 the fact.

25 DR. JAN: Yeah, intentional would be after the

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1 fact, and so...

2 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Alice, did the
3 subcommittee discuss at all or come to any comments
4 about whether this definition or this approach to
5 determining equal to status is different than what has
6 happened in the past? In other words, would this
7 approach, perhaps, identify programs that were
8 previously thought to be equal to and are no longer? Or
9 is it just seen as sort of the same approach and the
10 same criteria, but maybe just reviewed and assessed in a
11 slightly different manner? Or is it seen as a real
12 change in what we determine as an equal to state?

13 DR. JOHNSON: I know that Dr. Jan and I had
14 this discussion before the subcommittee met, and there
15 was some discussion during the subcommittee. And, no.
16 Basically, I think that the reviews that were done
17 previously, and the reviews that are conducted today,
18 did nothing different than what's outlined here. This
19 may be more a refinement of the criteria used. And I'll
20 Kevin, do you and Lee want to make any comment on that?

21 DR. ELFERING: Well, I think one of the things
22 that we'll want to be looking at is that we don't want
23 to be mirroring, and just -- and that there's different
24 paths to get to the same destination. And a lot of
25 things, state by state, and there's going to be nuances

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1 in each program that are going to be a little bit
2 different. But if the outcomes are the same, they
3 should be looked at, as that is really what is critical.
4 I think some of the things that we look at, and we try
5 to look at some of our plans based on risk, we've got
6 some pretty small processing plants that might produce
7 500 pounds of beef jerky a week, and that's all they do.
8 A pretty low-risk product to have an inspector going in
9 there in every day that they're processing product.
10 Now, there are some other facilities that we think are
11 producing a higher risk product that we want to put more
12 of our emphasis on. And even with sampling, I think
13 states -- one of the things that we're looking at right
14 now is doing -- we're doing a research project on using
15 bioluminescence in detection of *Listeria monocytogenes*.
16 There's a company uses bioluminescence. They want to be
17 able to have some of their equipment verified. And
18 we're going to do a study with them. Down the road,
19 maybe that's some way of ensuring that products are
20 produced under sanitary conditions. You know, not to
21 illuminate all sampling, but maybe that can be in
22 addition to or we can reduce sampling. And we want to
23 be able to do things like that and have it be
24 acceptable.

25 DR. JOHNSON: We -- I know that Mark is
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1 actually in a plant that is state inspected. Let's
2 address that question to him. Is he -- Mark, do you
3 feel like that this is any different than your reviews
4 before?

5 MR. SCHAD: Well, first of all, I've never had
6 a review from a -- the federal team that reviews state
7 program. I was never one of the sites that was
8 reviewed. My only thought was, while Dr. Elfering was
9 talking, that what it seems, maybe it doesn't spell it
10 out here in our report, but maybe we ought to say that
11 Dr. McKee is -- that we keep all this in mind when
12 they're doing their state reviews, that it is the
13 outcome, and not to get bogged down in the detail and
14 analysis.

15 DR. MCKEE: Any other questions or comments?
16 I had one. On number 7, on the enforcement of
17 regulations, was recall discussed by the committee at
18 all?

19 DR. JOHNSON: Recall was not discussed.

20 DR. ELFERING: I can maybe add a little bit of
21 information to some of the discussion that we had on
22 enforcement. One of the things is we have certain
23 penalties for certain violations in state programs, and
24 that's going to vary from state to state. A lot of the
25 charges that -- well, let's say it would be a criminal

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1 violation. Many of our violations are misdemeanors.
2 Under the federal program, there's violations that are
3 felonies. The only that we found is is that even though
4 there may be felonies, or violations that could be
5 considered felonies, the federal government has a real
6 difficult time in getting a U. S. attorney to charge
7 that particular case. It might be a small operation
8 that's selling non-inspected meat. Many times, the USDA
9 compliance will turn that case over to us because we can
10 get it prosecuted in a district court. And a county
11 attorney will charge those cases. And I would say that,
12 in the United States right now, that the majority of
13 federal violations are actually being taken care of or
14 prosecuted by state programs. So I think we -- there's
15 ways that we can do some of these things without having
16 the exact same penalties. If there are cases though
17 where there's significant concerns related to food
18 safety, we have -- we have other areas in our state
19 statutes, under theft statutes and under intentional
20 adulteration statutes that are much higher. The
21 penalties are much higher than what would be in federal
22 courts. So I think we've got a good balance in working
23 together. We don't have the exact same penalties for
24 enforcement, but we still end up with some pretty good
25 results, and still can be a deterrent to the industry.

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1 DR. MCKEE: Have you had to initiate a recall
2 in your state?

3 DR. ELFERING: One of the things that we have
4 not had to initiate any recalls. All of our clients'
5 whole product, we've had some positive product and,
6 luckily, the plant has held everything that we've had.
7 But we have -- we have had companies that have had
8 federal product that has been recalled that has been
9 processed by a -- in a federally inspected plant, and
10 then gone to a distributor. And we have a pretty good
11 way of having companies voluntarily recall product.

12 DR. MCKEE: But, I mean, as strictly state
13 operation, have you had to have them voluntarily recall
14 product?

15 DR. ELFERING: In a state op -- in a state
16 plant, we've not had to have any recalls. No.

17 DR. MCKEE: Dr. Jan, have you?

18 DR. JAN: Yes, we've had -- I'm thinking
19 probably over the last three or four years, we've had, I
20 think, four recalls. Two of them were salmonella in
21 dried beef or beef jerky, and two of them were listeria
22 in sausage. And in each case, we had had the plant reco
23 -- notify their customers, and then we would follow up.
24 And, in some of them, we had to teach them how to -- how
25 to do -- or not teach them, but we had to tell them,

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1 what do we mean by contacting your customers, and then
2 that your customers -- their distributors, if they
3 contact their customers to get it all back. So it took
4 maybe several phone calls, and -- but we could do that,
5 because that's what we focused our intention that, you
6 know, from our central offices on that particular issue.
7 We would then, you know, find out how much product was
8 involved, and we'd make sure that all the product was
9 accounted for, either returned back to the plant, or
10 destroyed. And some of it, obviously, was consumed.
11 Fortunately, the most -- more significant was in
12 sausage, and it was -- I mean *Listeria monocytogenes* in
13 sausage, and much of that sausage is traditionally
14 cooked, even though it's ready to eat, is further cooked
15 or reheated, and so some of that that was consumed. We
16 had no illnesses with any of the cases. But some of
17 that product was consumed, and we couldn't recall. But
18 we watch. We have a communication with our
19 epidemiologist, and so we let them know that this is out
20 there, and they look for cases just to see if there's
21 any with the same -- same geo type or, you know, they
22 can do the PCR testing to define if there are ever any
23 cases. And we hadn't had any cases. One of the dried
24 beef cases, but in fact, I'm not sure that either one of
25 them was a jerky. I think they were both dried beef.

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1 That the product may be a little peculiar to South Texas
2 is Carne seca. And that's a dried beef, and you could
3 almost use it like a dip or something, and put it
4 between the cheek and gum, probably. But that's not the
5 way that most people use that. They use that product as
6 a seasoning in eggs, or some egg products. And when
7 they cook the eggs, if they cook the eggs to a
8 temperature to kill salmonella, then it should kill the
9 salmonella. So I think that's another reason why we
10 didn't have diseases or cases in humans. Although we
11 have successfully recalled any of it that had not been
12 sold. And it did take contacting the customers of the
13 producer, and then verifying that that -- that those
14 customers had the right information, which included
15 contacting their customers, and getting the product
16 back. But we did get it -- most of it back in most
17 cases. In all cases.

18 DR. MCKEE: Did you do public notification?

19 DR. JAN: Yes, we did public notification.
20 Our first experience, and we were kind of green at it,
21 we -- and we learned. We allowed -- we told the
22 company, if you make the public service announcement,
23 then we won't. And we were uncomfortable with the way
24 that turned out, although we did get the product back,
25 that we decided that, after that, that we will make that

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1 announcement, and it will be up to the company if they
2 want us to say that the company is recalling, or do they
3 want us to say that we are advising you not to eat that
4 product because it may be dangerous. And most of the
5 time, they'll voluntarily recall, or they have, in every
6 case, voluntary recall. But we still send out, we note
7 at the time, what markets, where the customers are that
8 received this product, and then we notify through a
9 press release to all the media of all those different
10 locations where that product was distributed. And it's
11 been pretty successful.

12 DR. McKEE: Okay. Any other?

13 DR. ELFERING: Irene reminded me of one of the
14 other issues that we discussed last night. Although in
15 our state we adopted the Code of Federal Regulations,
16 there's some of the things in the enforcement parts that
17 we feel that we do much better. For example, if we have
18 a client, and we've done this. We had a plant where
19 there were continued violations nearly every day that
20 the inspector was going in. There were sanitation
21 issues. We did some environmental sampling for *Listeria*
22 *monocytogenes*. And found listeria in the environment,
23 not in product. But the sanitation of the plant was
24 such that we just withdrew them from inspection
25 immediately, without having to go through any of the

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1 additional bureaucratic layers. We set up, and we
2 offered them the opportunity for an administrative
3 meeting with an administrative law judge, but we
4 withdraw inspection immediately, and they will not go
5 back on their inspection until after that hearing. And,
6 in this particular case, we never did go back on our
7 inspection because they have to -- they have to be able
8 to demonstrate that they have made changes in their
9 process, and they were not able to do that. But we can
10 -- we can close a plant pretty quickly and not have to
11 go through all of the initial bureaucratic layers.

12 DR. McKEE: Okay, any other questions or
13 comments? Okay, great. Well, thank you very much.
14 Robert.

15 MR. TYNAN: I think the next item on the
16 agenda, we understand that Barbara O'Brien from our Food
17 Safety Education Staff is supposed to be here around
18 noon, so she's coming sooner than later, but it's not
19 quite as early as we had hoped. But, in the meantime,
20 we have a wonderful speaker, a new person to our agency
21 from the Public Health Service, Captain Cindy Pond, and
22 she'll talk a little bit about our MOA while we wait for
23 Barbara to come along. Cindy.

24 DR. POND: Great. Thank you, Robert. Thank
25 you for having me here today. This is my first

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1 committee meeting, and I'm happy to be here. I
2 appreciate the time on the schedule to discuss this.
3 This is one of the newest initiatives here at FSIS. And
4 that is a memorandum of agreement that was signed in
5 April by Dr. McKee, Dr. Murano and the Surgeon General,
6 to have officers, PHS commissioned officers, detailed
7 here to FSIS. Like I just said, this memorandum of
8 agreement allows officers from the entire PHS Commission
9 Corps to be detailed anywhere within FSIS, and the
10 beauty of this, which I'll discuss in a few minutes,
11 some of the benefits of corps officers is that this is
12 totally at the discretion of the hiring official. And
13 this is -- this will augment the use of the civil person
14 personnel that are currently in place at FSIS. I'd like
15 to spend a couple minutes talking about the commissioned
16 corps personnel system. If you are like me, when I got
17 out of veterinary school and took my first job in the
18 federal government, they offered me a choice between
19 being a civil service employee or a PHS commissioned
20 officer. And, at that point, I said, what's a PHS
21 commissioned officer. So at that point, I had no clue
22 about this whole personnel system. So I'll take a
23 couple minutes now just to run through some of the major
24 features. The PHS Commissioned Corps is the -- is
25 actually the uniformed service that is in the Department

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1 of Health and Human Services, and it is one of the seven
2 uniformed services. The others being Army, Navy, Air
3 Force, Marines, NOAA, and the Coast Guard. The
4 leadership of the PHS Commissioned Corps is provided by
5 the Surgeon General, who currently is Rear Admiral
6 Richard Carmona. But each officer is assigned to a
7 specific agency, a federal lab or DHHS -- DHHS agency,
8 or outside the DHHS agency to places like Bureau of
9 Prisons and Coast Guard and the Immigration and
10 Naturalization Service. The PHS Commissioned Corps,
11 unlike the other uniformed services, is composed
12 entirely of officers. And these officers, about 6,000
13 right now, are working in 20 different disciplines. And
14 the personnel system is organized around a rank and pay
15 structure that is similar to the components of DOD. If
16 you're familiar with the DOD way, then that's exactly
17 how ours is. It's set up the same way, with the rank of
18 pay and privileges of officers from those uniformed
19 services. The mission of the Public Health Service is
20 to provide highly trained and mobile public health
21 professionals to improve and advance the health of our
22 nation. And this meshes perfectly with Dr. McKee's
23 vision of FSIS as a premier public health agency that
24 will become a model. These officers will help deliver
25 health services to federal beneficiaries at a variety of

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1 sites. There are officers assigned to large cities,
2 small cities, under served populations, Native American
3 populations, a variety of assignments all over the
4 country. And, actually, through CDC, many officers are
5 assigned internationally. These officers will furnish
6 their health expertise in time of war and national or
7 international emergencies. After 911 and after the
8 anthrax scare, PHS officers were there to help. There
9 are several unique features of the Commissioned Corps
10 personnel system that are of benefit to agencies, and
11 I'm going to just go through a few of those right now.
12 And one is that these officers are non-bargaining unit
13 staff, meaning they cannot join unions if they exist at
14 the Agency. There is ease of hiring these officers. In
15 fact, if a program wishes to hire an officer, there is
16 no need for a merit promotion announcement, any type of
17 vacancy announcement. These officers can be hired
18 directly by the program. There's also ease of duty
19 assignment changes. If you have in mind the typical DOD
20 model of officers who are moved around, this applies
21 also to PHS Commissioned Corps officers. If, at some
22 point, the program determines that there is no longer a
23 need for an officer at a certain site, but there is a
24 critical need for that officer at another site, that
25 officer can be moved without his or her consent to the

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1 new site. Other unique features include a three year
2 probationary period where it is easy for the supervisor
3 to remove an officer that's not working out if there is
4 cause for such removal. There are tours of duty that
5 meet the program needs. Officers are on duty 24 hours a
6 day, 7 days a week. So their tour of duty can be
7 determined to meet the needs of wherever their duty
8 location is. And the cost of the -- it's the cost of
9 the office, not the level of the position, that
10 determines what the program will be paying for officers.
11 A recent study of PHS officers in all sites showed that
12 a third of the officers were working in positions that
13 were higher graded than their particular rank, which
14 means that it can be a cost savings to the Agency by
15 having officers in positions that are higher than their
16 current grade. There are several characteristics of
17 Commissioned Corps officers which make them attractive
18 to the Agency, and they are professional. In many
19 cases, there are PHS profession or PHS category requires
20 them to have mandatory licensure. They are public
21 health based. As I spoke, they are mobile. They are
22 available. The PHS has officers right now that are
23 interested in working here at FSIS, as well as a large
24 number of applicants. Both recent graduates and those
25 who have been out of school for a while that are

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1 interested in joining the Commissioned Corps. These
2 officers are flexible both in their tour of duty
3 location, and they are also responsive, able to be
4 assigned at a new duty location at any time. There's
5 quite a large pool of available officers for FSIS.
6 There are active duty officers, almost 6,000. There are
7 the -- there's the applicant pool. FSIS can also
8 utilize reserve corps officers, who can be called up for
9 short duties, short tours of duties if there was a
10 crisis or a problem that needed their expertise, but not
11 in a full-time, long-term capacity. There are summer
12 students, which can be hired. There is a special
13 program through the Public Health Service, which allows
14 the summer students to become officers for the summer,
15 or during a rotation that they may have, and allows them
16 to experience the time in the Agency, and, hopefully,
17 entice them to join the Agency after graduation. For
18 college students, there's actually a Public Health
19 Service program called the Senior Coast Out Program,
20 that allows the Agency to pay them as an officer during
21 their last year of college in return for a contract that
22 has them work at the Agency for a period that's twice
23 the length of their sponsored training. And that's
24 something especially attractive, that we are going to,
25 you know, hopefully explore here at FSIS. There are

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1 several benefits of this personnel system to FSIS. One,
2 it's an applicant pool that's highly educated, many with
3 mandatory licensure and prior federal experience. It's
4 a larger pool of applicants from which a selecting
5 official can choose their next employee. And FSIS can
6 offer applicants a career with assignments that may take
7 them to other agencies because, as a PHS officer, they
8 could spend time in FSIS, go to another federal agency,
9 get more training, more experience, perhaps managerial
10 experience, come back and become a manager again in
11 FSIS. So it's a whole career, and it's not just one job
12 in one spot for the whole time they're a government
13 employee. Another benefit is the diversity of PHS
14 officers, both racial and ethnic diversity, but also the
15 diversity of professions within the PHS Commissioned
16 Corps. By using the PHS Commissioned Corps personnel
17 system, FSIS can offer these folks a very attractive pay
18 and benefits package. Another benefit is the ability to
19 move the officer to meet needs and, again, flexibility.
20 Some of the benefits to officers include tax-free
21 allowances for food and housing, a non-contributory
22 retirement program, health and dental care for both the
23 officer and his or her dependents, 30 days of paid leave
24 yearly. And this starts from the very first day that
25 they are called to active duty. There's not a need to

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1 wait so many years to gain so many hours per pay period.
2 Sick leave is granted as is medically necessary.
3 There's not a limit on that. And Social Security
4 coverage is paid for the officers. Other benefits
5 include a thrift savings program which allows officers
6 to put pre-tax dollars into a savings plan that they
7 will later draw from. Travel and transportation
8 benefits, which are often very attractive to new
9 officers just coming out of college. Malpractice
10 coverage is provided for those in the medical
11 professions as long as they are performing duties of
12 their job. And as far as the DOD privileges, they
13 include a huge range of opportunities for folks to
14 partake, including base post exchange and commissary
15 privileges, space available flights and recreational
16 facilities, and VA benefits also. And probably most
17 important would be for some who have been in the prior
18 military, or have reserve time, is that they can be
19 given credit for that time as a commissioned officer.
20 The cost to the program is based then on the pay and
21 allowances for the officer that's selected, Social
22 Security and Medicare, which are paid by the Agency, any
23 travel or moving costs which are associated with
24 bringing the officer to their duty station, and
25 administrative costs. Currently, there are 11 officers

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1 at FSIS. But if I came to you a year from now,
2 hopefully that we'll have a much larger number. That's
3 my goal. We're equally split as equal as we can between
4 males and females, and a variety of professions. We
5 have three environmental health officers, which are --
6 previously were known as sanitarians, three nurses, two
7 veterinarians, two medical officers, and one scientist.
8 As far as plans for the future, the first is education.
9 It's educating the program officials at FSIS on what
10 this personnel system is. Many of them are unfamiliar
11 with this, may never have heard of the Public Health
12 Service Commission Corps. And my job will be to educate
13 them on the benefits to them of having these officers on
14 their staff. In addition, I will be going out and doing
15 outreach to consumer groups and veterinary schools and
16 other -- others, in order to educate them on the
17 opportunities now that exist. There originally was, for
18 probably about the last six or seven years, a very small
19 agreement here at USDA, FSIS, to have officers. But
20 this is a much more expanded agreement now that will
21 allow a large variety of officers to be detailed
22 anywhere. And so my goal is to bring this word to those
23 in the outside world of veterinarians and others to
24 bring them to -- inform them of the opportunities that
25 now exist. And that goes along with recruitment. If

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1 the flood gates that opened when the memorandum of
2 agreement was signed are any indication, I'm not going
3 to have to do a lot of recruitment. I'm getting more
4 calls and emails than I can handle right now of folks
5 that are interested in working at FSIS. So it will be a
6 matter of contacting those and trying to match make them
7 into the appropriate positions. So education and
8 recruitment together will lead to growth of this as a
9 personnel system here at FSIS. So in closing, I'd have
10 to say that the potential benefits of this second
11 personnel system boil down to giving FSIS selecting
12 officials with vacancies options. They have the civil
13 service option, but now they will also have the option
14 of a totally separate and indifferent and distinct
15 personnel system, the PHS Commissioned Corps. If you
16 have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them. Dr.
17 Hollingsworth?

18 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Thank you, Cindy. I
19 appreciate the background information. I truly think
20 this is an excellent idea for FSIS. My question is, of
21 the 11 people who are currently onboard, are they all
22 located at headquarters? Are any of them in field
23 positions? And is there a plan for recruiting for field
24 positions, and not just at headquarters, if they're all
25 here now?

1 DR. POND: Absolutely yes. Right now there
2 are three of the officers are in the field, and the
3 others are here at headquarters. But, yes, there is a
4 very concerted effort because a large number of our
5 vacancies are in the field. That is where my huge -- my
6 huge push will be, is to get those positions in the
7 field. Ms. Eskin?

8 MS. ESKIN: My question actually follows up on
9 Dr. Hollingsworth. Both currently, can you give us any
10 example of, again, you said that there are a number of
11 officers currently in the headquarters, sort of how they
12 are specifically detailed and where they're actually
13 working? That's current. That's the first part. And,
14 second, how do you, again, how do you see them working
15 in the field? You can, again, give a hypothetical
16 situation...

17 DR. POND: Um-hum. Okay. Sure.

18 MS. ESKIN: ...and where you think that will
19 happen.

20 DR. POND: The officers that are in
21 headquarters, there's myself and the Office of the
22 Administrator, and the others are located in the Office
23 of Public Health and Science. That's where the original
24 memorandum of agreement allowed officers to be detailed.
25 So that's why there's such a large number there. And

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1 then the additional three officers that are located in
2 the field. What I'm doing is working now with the Human
3 Resources Division on every vacancy to determine whether
4 it's an appropriate vacancy for a commissioned officer.
5 There are some types of positions which, obviously,
6 aren't appropriate. And so -- but on the others that
7 are appropriate, we will be putting language on each of
8 those announcements, saying that Commissioned Corps
9 officers and applicants may apply. And so it will be, I
10 envision, officers in all phases of FSIS work at all
11 sites. The initial need, one of our critical needs, is
12 for veterinarians. And so that will be a very critical
13 push to start with, to try to hire VMOs in a variety of
14 positions at the planned level and up. But it's a full
15 -- this is not just a limited -- limited to areas,
16 limited to personnel, limited to disciplines. This is a
17 whole, full force outreach to put officers in all areas.

18 MR. GOVRO: Are the pay scales for the
19 positions through agency consistent with those of the
20 FSIS employees doing similar jobs?

21 DR. POND: Okay. Yes, they are. In fact, we
22 ran a lot of numbers, and it's a different pay system,
23 so it's apples and oranges. But, in some cases, the
24 officers will make slightly less money than they would
25 as a civil service person. But because of the non-

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1 taxability of their allowances, they may take home more
2 money than they would as a civil service, and care will
3 be taken to place appropriately ranked officers in
4 appropriately graded civil service positions. So we're,
5 obviously, not going to have a high-ranking officer
6 stuck in a GS7 level position. So that will be
7 carefully monitored. But, you know, and also for some
8 folks that have the prior military time or reserve time,
9 they're bumped up on the pay scale because of their
10 prior military time. So even with a comparable rank of,
11 perhaps, coming in as an O3, a lieutenant, they will see
12 an increase in pay because of prior military time. But
13 it will be -- it will vary on a case-by-case basis.
14 Other questions?

15 DR. JAN: I've got one...

16 DR. POND: Dr. Jan.

17 DR. JAN: ...question that's probably not a
18 critical issue, but I just wonder if veterinarians from
19 the Corps would be selected as circuit supervisors in a
20 district or rural area when they work with all the
21 plants and work, you know, in plant and all that. Are
22 they expected to wear a uniform, or are they allowed to
23 be dressed as a civilian in the civilian world? I don't
24 know that it would make a difference, but in some more
25 rural areas, it may be more intimidating or something to

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1 the industry, so...

2 DR. POND: Yeah, that's something that we'll
3 have to address when we get an officer in that position.
4 You know, it will have to be sensitive to those
5 concerns. But there are a variety of uniforms so, you
6 know, hopeful more practical utility uniforms if we
7 decided it would work to have an officer in uniform.

8 DR. McKEE: Yeah, let me comment to that.
9 FSIS will expect that the Agency expectations are that
10 the uniform be worn when not in plant. But, of course,
11 if they were in the plant, they would wear whatever was
12 standard for the plant and for what an inspector needed
13 to be. I think, in the times of Homeland Security
14 issues, I think it might be more of a comforting as
15 opposed to an intimidating kind of an approach, and
16 we're hoping to approach it in that way. And I think
17 the opportunity here is not only to have trained public
18 health professionals in the veterinary field hard to
19 fill areas for one, but I think it's an opportunity to
20 have people throughout the nation that will be the glue,
21 so to speak, to hold FSIS together in times of
22 emergency. These folks are 24/7, hooked into the HHS
23 group as well, and we have a conduit chain of command
24 there that I think is going to be really value added for
25 us to protect the public and the food supply. So that's

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1 one of the, I think, benefits of moving with the Corps
2 interfacing with many of the activities in FSIS.

3 DR. JAN: On that, even if you had an IIC, in-
4 plant IIC, you know, the uniform is generally not
5 provided by the plant. I would think probably provided
6 by -- I mean, they may -- a plant may provide it, but I
7 don't -- if you took the buttons and all that, but then
8 I guess you'd be out of uniform, if you could wear -- I
9 know when I was on active duty, the nurses and those
10 type had a separate uniform. Still a uniform.

11 DR. MCKEE: Um-hum.

12 DR. JAN: But -- so a white uniform would be
13 appropriate and still give that uniform, but when you
14 have the tags, of course, you couldn't be around food
15 because of the opportunity of foreign things. So I
16 don't know, I guess once you took the tags off, you'd
17 have to go civilian, right?

18 DR. POND: No, there's actually working
19 uniforms that don't have a nametag or ribbons.

20 DR. JAN: Oh, is that right? So...

21 DR. POND: Yeah. So yeah...

22 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Cindy, isn't it true that
23 CC, the commissioned officers, only have to wear the
24 uniform one day a week? I know when I was there, it was
25 Tuesday...

1 DR. POND: Right.

2 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: ...everybody was in
3 uniform. The rest of the week...

4 DR. POND: Um-hum.

5 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: ...they just wore
6 whatever...

7 DR. POND: Right. Yes.

8 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: ...but uniform Tuesday.

9 DR. POND: Right. Each agency had -- normally
10 sets the wear. I was at NIH and it was every Wednesday.
11 So whenever saw people they said, it must be Wednesday.
12 Here at FSIS right now, as of today, our policy is a
13 four-day-a-week wear. I encourage officers to wear it
14 every day. I wear it every day. It's up to the
15 individual agency.

16 DR. McKEE: Yeah, I think you're going to see
17 a trend that, in order to really reap the value of the
18 Commissioned Corps Public Health Service, that there be
19 more encouragement to the entire Corps, regardless of
20 which agency they're in, to wear their uniform, as much
21 as visibility, if nothing else. Dr. Carpenter.

22 DR. CARPENTER: Thank you for a very
23 enlightening presentation about how this impacts FSIS,
24 but I'd just like clarifications. Did you say there's
25 preference given to candidates that have advanced

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1 degrees post baccalaureate, or is everyone equal?

2 DR. POND: Well, it depends on the position
3 and it depends on the professional within the PHS.
4 There are a variety of categories. There are medical
5 officers and nurse officers and veterinarians, and
6 within the PHS. And FSIS can draw from any number, any
7 one of those professional categories, to fill a given
8 position.

9 DR. CARPENTER: Selecting nurses, or
10 environmental health officers, are at least Master's
11 degrees?

12 DR. POND: No, they're regular nursing degrees
13 and, I mean, many of them do have advanced degrees, but
14 they don't have to as a -- as a qualification to be
15 commissioned.

16 DR. CARPENTER: And the second question. The
17 numbers of individuals eventually, that will be in
18 FSIS's, is that limited by the amount of budget that's
19 going to be allocated to this, to those individuals?

20 DR. POND: Do you want to answer that?

21 DR. MCKEE: Yeah, there won't be a limit, but
22 we do -- it is budget constrained to some degree. And
23 we've targeted 40 for next year. So that would triple
24 the size of the -- of the number we've got, because
25 we've got a very small number. But a work force of

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1 10,000, we hope to go from there.

2 DR. CARPENTER: I think it might be another
3 opportunity to get my medical assistant career, of
4 option to pursue.

5 MR. TYNAN: Other questions or comments for
6 Captain Pond? Okay, Cindy, thank you very much for the
7 presentation. Now we have some more choices to make.
8 Apparently, Barbara has not quite made it yet, and if
9 she's not here until twelve, that gives us about a half-
10 hour gap, so we could, perhaps, break early for lunch,
11 we could take a long break until Barbara gets here.
12 What's your pleasure?

13 DR. LEECH: Do we dare wrap up before...

14 MR. TYNAN: Well, we could do -- well, we
15 certainly could -- we certainly could give that a try if
16 you'd like to do that.

17 MS. ESKIN: We could also talk about issues
18 for the next meeting.

19 MR. TYNAN: Okay, let's do that. So we'll
20 jump around in the agenda. We'll be very flexible.
21 This is unusual for a federal agency, but we will. So I
22 think we'll skip down to Remaining Issues and Plans for
23 Next Meeting. One of the things that we have to plan
24 for is the next meeting, and when we would have it. And
25 I'll probably open up to -- I think last year we had it

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1 in November, and I think it was the 7th or 8th of
2 November. I think. Yeah. So we would be planning
3 again for a November meeting, so our next meeting would
4 be November of this year, as opposed to next year or the
5 year after. So we'll have it in November of this year.
6 And I know I did not bring a calendar. I know probably
7 all of you -- yes, sir.

8 DR. DENTON: Just one quick comment. The only
9 thing that I know that would conflict in early November
10 is the Institute of Food Technologists is...

11 MR. TYNAN: Okay.

12 DR. DENTON: ...sponsoring an International
13 Food Safety and Quality Conference 7, 8 and 9 in
14 November. And that's...

15 MS. ESKIN: That's a weekend.

16 MR. TYNAN: So would it be easier to -- maybe
17 I've got my dates wrong. Mine is 5 through 7, I think.
18 It's during the week.

19 DR. LEECH: Yeah, Wednesday's the 5th.

20 MR. TYNAN: Okay. Would it be easier to wrap
21 the meeting in conjunction with that? In other words,
22 to do it say 9th, 10th and 11th?

23 DR. DENTON: It's in Orlando.

24 MR. TYNAN: Well, maybe we can have our
25 meeting in Orlando. There you go. Mickey Mouse

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1 welcome. I would be absolutely in favor of that. I'm
2 not sure we can pull that off or we'd give it a try.
3 yes, Dr. Leech.

4 DR. LEECH: I would, for me, it would work
5 better if we'd do it in the first half of the month
6 versus the last half of the Month of November. Because,
7 you know, we've got conflicts there, but I've got some
8 later on in the month too.

9 MR. TYNAN: Okay, well why don't we do this?
10 Why don't I send out a schedule, and then we can pick
11 some dates that are agreeable to everybody.

12 DR. LEECH: And it does help when we get them
13 on the calendar early.

14 MR. TYNAN: Yes, ma'am.

15 DR. LEECH: I can schedule my class schedule
16 to be away when I've got advance warning, but it's
17 really tough for me to be away on a couple weeks'
18 notice.

19 MR. TYNAN: We'll try to do that in the next
20 few weeks, yeah, so that it doesn't -- it doesn't go too
21 long. I mentioned to someone earlier that this was the
22 year that we have to do the two-year certification, and
23 as a result, that causes some delays that we did not
24 anticipate. Since we won't have to do that for
25 November, and we should be able to find a date pretty

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1 early and get it tied down sooner than later. Are there
2 -- I'm sorry, Dr. Carpenter, did you have a...

3 DR. CARPENTER: No, no, I'm sorry.

4 MR. TYNAN: That flag was up and -- yes,
5 Kevin.

6 DR. ELFERING: Just on dates, you're pretty
7 much limited depending on how you deal with federal
8 holidays...

9 MR. TYNAN: Oh, okay.

10 DR. ELFERING: ...because the 11th is a
11 Tuesday, Veterans' Day, so -- and I'm sure you wouldn't
12 want to meet the week of Thanksgiving. So it would
13 either be the first or third week in November.

14 MR. TYNAN: We could do it after Thanksgiving
15 and have leftovers at that lunch.

16 DR. ELFERING: We could meet in Minnesota too
17 if it's convenient.

18 MR. TYNAN: We'll try and find a date.
19 Alternatively, if November does not look like a good
20 date, should we try for early December, or maybe move it
21 up to October?

22 DR. LEECH: October's better.

23 MR. TYNAN: October's better. Okay. I mean
24 so November is the first choice, if we can do it.
25 October is the second choice. And, hopefully, we don't

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1 have to go beyond that.

2 DR. DENTON: You do run into the USDA jam
3 meeting also in October.

4 DR. LEECH: When's that?

5 MR. TYNAN: Okay, is there any...

6 DR. DENTON: I'm not sure exactly.

7 MR. TYNAN: Could we try August? Work on
8 August. Okay, October.

9 MS. BALDWIN: U. S. Animal Health Meeting is
10 October 10, and it starts and runs through the 16th.

11 MR. TYNAN: Okay. Thank you for bringing that
12 up. So we do have some constraints, but, hopefully,
13 we'll find a date that's agreeable. We did it this
14 time, so we should be able to do it again. What other
15 issues do we need to talk about?

16 DR. LEECH: Could we ask that maybe as things come out,
17 that they be shared with the committee? For example, I
18 knew that the 66-page document that we got when we got
19 here was on the Internet, hadn't been able to get it.
20 But one -- if we could get big things like that, once we
21 arrive here, realistically, our schedule's tight enough,
22 I'm not going to sit up and read it. And some things
23 like this might be appropriate just to make the
24 committee aware of, you know, as they come along, being
25 sure that people have access to printable copies. I

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1 don't -- a 66-page document is pretty difficult for me
2 to leave read right on the web. I don't know about the
3 rest of you. So we kind of need to be sure that people
4 can print them. And that was one of the problems with
5 this particular piece. But it's very, very helpful to
6 have things to read in advance, to think about, to
7 sometimes be able to talk with some other people, and
8 that kind of thing. And I know, you know, there were
9 some constraints this time and so forth. But if we
10 couldn't even know what the issues are like a month in
11 advance or something. It's really tough. I got about
12 three days notice on what the issues that we were going
13 to be discussing were, and that limits -- that makes me
14 not as effective in what I can do for you all. So I
15 would just encourage us to -- you know, there may be
16 communications that need to be sent out, or could be
17 sent out along the way, when new publications come out
18 or whatever, so there's more of an ongoing
19 communication. And then if we could kind of say that we
20 want to know what the issues we're going to deal with
21 say a month in advance, I think that could make the
22 committee really a lot more effective.

23 MR. TYNAN: Other comments? We'll try and do
24 better in terms of getting some of those things out.
25 Again, because of the shift in dates that resulted.

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1 DR. LEECH: Oh, yeah. Go ahead, Alice, you
2 first.

3 MR. TYNAN: All right, who wants to --
4 Alice.

5 DR. LEECH: Go first.

6 MR. TYNAN: Oh, I'm sorry, Dr...

7 MS. ESKIN: In the discussions we had
8 yesterday about legislative issues, I raised the issue
9 of possible legislative amendments that could provide
10 FSIS with more enforcement tools in filling out its
11 mandate. Again, the Secretary raised this issue, saying
12 that she wanted to consider possibilities. And as an
13 advisory committee, I think this is something we could
14 contribute. Particularly those who come from states
15 that have inspection systems and that have laws that
16 maybe have very effective tools. So I would be
17 interested to hear from those in the Agency and in the
18 Department as a whole that may be looking at this issue.
19 And it would be nice if we could react to what the
20 Agency's thinking is and contribute to that. Again,
21 with other state, perhaps, systems or anything else that
22 may help in the consideration.

23 DR. JOHNSON: You know, but to piggyback on
24 both Irene and Sandra, it would be very -- it would be
25 useful, and I know, Tom, it's hard for you guys as well,

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1 but if there were a list of issues that were put out
2 sometime during the summer or, you know, then 60 days
3 before you finalize the agenda, to say, hey, here's a
4 list of topics we're considering. You know, any of them
5 you'd like to be sure get on the agenda. Or, you know,
6 there are -- the committee members feel there's other
7 issues, then we could add. Kind of the tentative agenda
8 thing before it's finalized. You know, it certainly, I
9 know because of some of the restructuring and the whole
10 recrediting the committee, we didn't get our materials
11 very timely. But it would be good to have them, the
12 books and as much information as we can, ahead of time
13 because it really does help. I mean we really do read
14 it, but it just takes a little time to do it. Thank
15 you.

16 DR. LEECH: And it can be sent electronically.
17 I mean I don't know if it would necessarily have to have
18 a notebook that we need to be sure there are things we
19 can download and we really can read them.

20 MR. TYNAN: Is that -- would that be a
21 preferred method of getting these to you,
22 electronically?

23 MS. ESKIN: That's one way, and certainly, as
24 Alice suggests, if two months in advance you all had a
25 tentative list of things that you want us to take a look

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1 at and consider, than we can also respond and say, yes,
2 and here's what we want to know about this, or can we
3 also discuss these three other issues. So that's not
4 even -- that's more just a communication not a -- you
5 know, certainly, in advance of the meeting, getting the
6 materials is very important, but this is even before
7 that, as you're thinking about it. It may even be
8 further ahead than two months that you start thinking
9 about the agenda for the meeting based on what we talked
10 about, you know, in the previous meetings, and all the
11 other issues that you want our input on.

12 MR. TYNAN: I was going to make a joke when
13 you said even beyond two months, but I decided I would
14 not do that. We were having difficulty with two weeks
15 this time. I apologize. Michael, you have -- use a
16 different kind of a system. You have a Mac.

17 MR. GOVRO: Um-hum.

18 MR. TYNAN: Is that going to cause you any
19 difficulty, sending things electronically?

20 MR. GOVRO: No, it isn't.

21 MR. TYNAN: Okay.

22 DR. LEECH: And I guess my suggestion that I,
23 as things come out that could apply to the committee,
24 sending them along the way, that could even help when
25 you've got a tight deadline at the end. If some things

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1 have been kind of distributed, and people are up to date
2 on what kinds of things are out and so forth, you know,
3 if it's kind of an ongoing, every so often
4 communication.

5 MR. TYNAN: Okay.

6 DR. LEECH: Not necessarily an every month or
7 whatever, but when something's appropriate, share it.

8 MS. ESKIN: Yeah, actually, I don't know,
9 Irene, if you're signed up on the FSIS list serve for
10 constituent updates on a weekly basis. I mean I don't
11 know if everyone on the committee is signed up. But
12 that's one way you don't have to duplicate effort, if
13 everyone is kept up to date on a regular basis of what's
14 going on at the Agency.

15 MR. TYNAN: Are you all on the constituent
16 update? Are there other -- yes, sir.

17 MR. GOVRO: Would it be possible to use the
18 committee web site to post information or, perhaps, even
19 solicit information or comments? I'm thinking about
20 potential topics, put some contact information out
21 there, maybe put the list of topics you've suggested as
22 possible topics for the next meeting. And people could
23 contact you and add others. Seems like things are
24 always developing with the Agency. There's things going
25 on. There's lawsuits and issues of concerns that are

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1 always developing, and you could use the web site to
2 take input from the committee members as well as the
3 public on what we might discuss, as well as -- I've been
4 to the web site a couple times to look for the dates of
5 the upcoming meetings, because we had a very late notice
6 on the -- from the date for this meeting. And it's --
7 I'm not aware that that information has ever been put on
8 there. It's always been sort of an after-the-fact
9 thing. And I'm thinking that you might be able to use
10 the web site kind of proactively for...

11 MR. TYNAN: We'll look at that and see how we
12 can do that, if that would help, as opposed to sending
13 emails or things of that nature. Other thoughts? Well,
14 I have a suggestion, we take maybe a quick break, and
15 see if Barbara arrives here in about ten minutes, so
16 maybe we could take a pit stop, have some coffee, and be
17 ready when Barbara gets here.

18 ***

19 [Recess]

20 ***

21 MR. TYNAN: Barbara made it. Hustled down
22 here to get here to be a little bit earlier than she was
23 on the agenda. I just asked her if she was -- had
24 composed herself sufficiently, and she said she's as
25 composed as she's going to be. So, with that, I'm going

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1 to turn it over to Ms. O'Brien.

2 MS. O'BRIEN: So if we stutter and sputter,
3 it's your fault for being early, not mine. Anyhow,
4 thank you for having me here today. I'm Barbara
5 O'Brien. I'm the Deputy Director of Food Safety
6 Education at FSIS, and it's a real pleasure to be the
7 ending speaker at your meeting here, because we're
8 ending on a real happy, positive note, discussing our
9 USDA food safety mobile project. And, basically, for
10 some of you -- oh, dear. Stress management. Okay.
11 We're -- it will be an introduction to the mobile. But
12 for others, it will be an update. And there we have the
13 USDA Food Safety Mobile. Some of you may have already
14 seen it. Others, if you haven't, it may be coming to
15 your area, and that's the purpose of the mobile, is to
16 take it across the country. The mobile project was
17 launched on March 19, this past year, at the Food Safety
18 Summit by Secretary Veneman and Under Secretary for Food
19 Safety, Dr. Elsa Murano. A lot of work has gone into
20 this particular project, but we feel that all the
21 endeavors will bear fruit for all of us as we go around
22 the country educating consumers. The program,
23 basically, promotes the four food safety messages of the
24 Fight BAC® Campaign, the Partnership for Food Safety
25 Education. And those key messages are clean, separate,

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1 cook and chill. The -- one of the purposes for the
2 mobile is to help support local educators and partners
3 out in the field as they are doing their food safety
4 education projects and educational programs. And
5 there's a picture. I believe that was when we went to
6 Florida. We're supporting the local people and
7 partnering with them. We want them to work with us, not
8 for us. And so this is really key to making the project
9 work. It's a means to get everybody involved in
10 educating consumers. Basically, educating everybody
11 from farm to table about food safety. And here's a
12 picture of one of our staff members, the young lady in
13 the hat, who is -- looks like they're eating lunch, but
14 actually, they're doing a little strategy planning for
15 the events that are taking place. Actually, that was
16 down in Florida. And the young lady on our staff is
17 Laura Reiser, and she has been very instrumental in this
18 project and in the scheduling of this project. And
19 those of you who have been involved in scheduling even
20 small things can imagine what it's like to schedule this
21 mobile nationwide. And she's done an absolutely
22 fantastic job. And it's -- the mobile is continuously
23 traveling throughout the Continental United States. If
24 we had little flippers or wings we would take it to
25 Hawaii. However, we weren't able to do that. We

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1 started out in Beltsville. Basically, that's the home
2 of the mobile, because that's where the Food Safety
3 Education Staff, we're now housed out in our George
4 Washington Carver Center out in Beltsville. And, after
5 the launch, the first stop was down in Florida. And, as
6 you can see, the sign says, The Blues Festival. We went
7 to various events down there. And one of them was the
8 Tampa Bay Blues Festival. Then -- and we also did some
9 grocery stores in Florida and various other venues.
10 Then the mobile proceeded on to Texas, and it's gone to
11 Kentucky, and Nashville, and we've gone all over the
12 place, as you can see. And it's a very bold, eye-
13 catching design over the mobile. We had it, basically,
14 a standard recreational vehicle was purchased, and then
15 we had it what we call wrapped or designed, and we --
16 the designs include food safety messages, and they
17 really emphasize the four key messages for consumers.
18 As I said, the clean, separate, cook and chill. And
19 those are key behaviors that we want consumers to adopt
20 in order to continue to have safe food. And so these
21 are just some of the events that we have gone to
22 throughout the country. And this is just reflecting
23 what we've done from March to June with the Tampa Bay
24 Blues Festival. We went to St. Louis, Missouri. There
25 was a big parade out there, the Annie Malone Parade.

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1 It's the biggest African American parade in the country.
2 And so we thought that was a very appropriate place for
3 the mobile to be because we are trying to target some of
4 the under served populations throughout the nation, and
5 we felt the African American population, we need to
6 target them with our food safety messages. Louisville,
7 they did Fun Over Louisville. That was prior to the
8 Derby. And then the Indy 500, I had the privilege of
9 being part of the Indy 500. Now, we weren't at the
10 race, itself, so don't get all excited. This was the
11 Community the day before the race, and actually, this
12 was a real good venue for us because there were over
13 1,000 students there. They were honor students
14 throughout the Indianapolis area. So this was a big
15 field -- a field trip for them to come to the Indy 500,
16 like they did. And we were able to distribute a lot of
17 information. And there was a genuine interest there.
18 And they had their teachers there. So we figured it was
19 a multiplier effect. We were getting the message out to
20 lots of people. And, often times, we'll have a cooking
21 demonstration, a grilling demonstration. But it was
22 extremely windy that day, so we felt, for the safety of
23 the children and ourselves, we weren't going to set up a
24 grill and, possibly, have an accident occur. But when
25 we do a grilling demonstration, we show people how to

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1 properly use a food thermometer, how to insert it in the
2 grilled beef patty to make sure it's reached 160
3 degrees. So we're doing all kinds of stuff. We're not
4 just driving around the country per se. Actually, we
5 have a driver, a contract driver, who is responsible for
6 driving the mobile. No one lives inside the mobile.
7 It's set up, basically we use it as an office and
8 storage area. Now, if local media wanted to do some
9 interviews. For instance, if Dr. Murano or Secretary
10 Veneman were accompanying the mobile on events, we could
11 take them inside and give them an opportunity to do an
12 interview in there. But it's -- it's a -- every inch of
13 that mobile is being used for food safety information
14 and to help get the word out to consumers. And then
15 here's some of the stories we've done in the educational
16 arena. You can see Secretary Veneman there. This was
17 an event that we did in Nashville, Tennessee. And after
18 my PowerPoint, I do have three little videos to show
19 you, and one is about the event that we did in Nashville
20 with Wynona Judd. Having celebrities be part of your
21 events is really, we find it to be very successful. You
22 get wonderful media pickup, and it's really -- and
23 that's in print media and TV, and it's a wonderful way
24 to get the word out and to educate all consumers. And
25 then in the lower left-hand corner there you see our

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1 Thermy™ and BAC® characters. We have those on the --
2 the mobile, besides being outfitted with all the food
3 safety education materials and the cooking implements
4 and the demonstration things that we need, we have one
5 BAC® and one Thermy™. And those are wonderful. They're
6 teaching characters, as you well know, and they're a
7 wonderful way to get the children involved. And,
8 actually, they get all people involved because we do ask
9 for volunteers at the local level to wear the costumes.
10 But, as you can see, this is at a school, and it's
11 partnering with the local Extension people, and it was a
12 very wonderful opportunity. One of my staff members
13 there, Holly McPeak, was on this particular trip, and
14 Holly's a real dynamic, go-gettum' type person, so it
15 was a very successful event. We were really pleased
16 about that. And it's interesting to see the children
17 interact with the dignitaries, and with the celebrities
18 too. And in the top corner there, you see BAC®. Now,
19 we have to be careful with BAC®. BAC®'s inflated, but he
20 will tip. He's not a weeble. And so we had to be real
21 careful with him, so we have to make sure that he's
22 accompanied at all times. I can talk real fast. I
23 think you figured that out. And then here is some of
24 the media coverage that we've had with the mobile. And
25 our staff

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1 does a lot of advance work. We call the local Extension
2 people, the Health Department, the Departments of
3 Agriculture, and we work them and through them to get
4 media, local media, involved. And it's been very
5 successful in getting the pickup. As you can see,
6 Wynona generated -- her own people, actually, generated
7 some publicity, which was very good for us. And then we
8 have the mobile. The Telegram, the Daily Telegram, that
9 was one of the events that Holly and two of the other
10 staff members were at. And the one grocery store ad,
11 Alberston's, down in Florida, actually put the mobile on
12 their ad to get their -- so their customers would know
13 that this event was going to happen. And we provide the
14 advance information that the various people need. We
15 have a sample press release, sample promotional
16 materials. Our staff has done a lot of work to make it
17 as easy for our partners as is possible to get them to
18 work with us to promote food safety education. And
19 there's another grocery store that we were able to
20 partner with. The Meijer Grocery Store. And those are
21 very effective because you get the people, the customers
22 as they're coming and going from the store, and it's a
23 real good opportunity to talk one-on-one. And that's a
24 real advantage to the mobile, too, is that one-on-one,
25 talking to the consumer at the grassroots level so that

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1 we can help educate them. And then there -- here are
2 some examples of partnering. And, actually, in the top
3 photo, that's Susan Conley, our Director, who's with the
4 mobile in Madison, Wisconsin. As we speak, they're
5 doing several events up there. And there she is doing a
6 grilling demonstration, and talking to a consumer. And
7 same way down below, we have the state and county
8 Extension people. We ask them to bring their things,
9 their programs over to the mobile so that we can show
10 the local people what is being done at the local level.
11 And we have some wonderful educators out there, and
12 they're doing a really good job with the consumers.
13 And here are some others. We've been fortunate there.
14 The State Department of Agriculture and Consumer
15 Services, they were real instrumental down in Florida,
16 when we went down there, when we started out on our
17 tour. And the Food and Drug Administration takes an
18 active role and partners with us. And they have
19 wonderful food safety education programs also. So it's
20 just another means for them to get the word out. And
21 it's a good example of government working with partners,
22 and it gives a face to food safety education to see the
23 people out there working, and sharing, and educating
24 people. And our FSIS district offices also, we notify
25 them when we're going to be in their area, and if they

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1 have the opportunity to come and work with us, they do.
2 And I know, for instance, we were down in Arkansas, and
3 that district office took a real active role. And so
4 it's just a neat way of working with people, and all
5 towards the same common goal. And again, here's some
6 just other examples of events that we've done. The
7 Albertson's Grocery Store, and the Meijer Stores. And
8 it's interesting. Often times, the amount of
9 participation you get from the customers depends on
10 where they put you in the parking lot. So we always try
11 to get there very early in the morning so we get a prime
12 location in the parking lot or, often times, they have a
13 cement skirt right in front of the store, and we've been
14 able to park on there. And that's really good because
15 then they'll come right over to the mobile to see what's
16 going on, because it is rather eye catching. And,
17 however, when I was in Indy, when I -- the mobile is a
18 very bold design, but we saw some of the 18 wheelers
19 that the racecar drivers had, you know, I thought, okay,
20 fine. You know, we're in competition here. But we had
21 an educational product to sell, and we did a good job, I
22 feel. And here is the event with Wynona Judd and
23 Secretary Veneman and Dr. Murano at the University
24 School of Nashville. And getting children involved is
25 always wonderful. And this got real good media pickup.

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1 Well, by the virtue of the fact that we had Wynona
2 involved. But when you have children involved too, it
3 just give it another flavor. And we have this little
4 book called, "Fight BAC[®]," that the University of
5 Georgia developed, that takes the "Fight BAC[®]" message
6 and does it in a little book form for children. And the
7 Secretary and the Under Secretary and Wynona were
8 reading parts of the book to the children. And we also
9 have it available in Spanish. We try and have our
10 materials available in English and Spanish so that we
11 can increase and expand our outreach. And there's the
12 picture again of the school in Wisconsin where Holly had
13 BAC[®] and Thermy[™]. And again, that was a real successful
14 venue. And also, in going BAC[®] to the children, as you
15 know, children are at risk for food-borne illness, and
16 so we -- essentially, children under ten. So they are
17 part of the population that we are targeting with our
18 food safety education messages through our partners.
19 And also your seniors are at risk for food-borne
20 illness. Particularly listeria. And so this was a
21 senior center that the Extension Agent in Wisconsin was
22 involved in doing some education. And so you can see
23 they're having a good time. And bringing the characters
24 there, I think we're all children at heart. It just
25 gives it a different face and a different flavor. But

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1 we take our education role very seriously and the role
2 that we play in public health. But we also try to make
3 it fun. An appropriate use of humor can make things
4 more memorable than just standing there talking like
5 this. And so we try and incorporate as many unique
6 training aids as we can. And we use social marketing
7 principles. And I won't go into that right now. But,
8 basically, social marketing, you want to effect positive
9 behavior changes, and that's the goal of most of our
10 education programs. And, of course, we always have our
11 little BAC[®] guy and our Thermy[™] guy. And they are good
12 ambassadors for the Agency and for food safety, and we
13 use them as often as we can. And we ask for -- like I
14 said, we ask for volunteers to be in the costumes, or we
15 volunteer people. And but it works. So it's very
16 effective. And it's interesting to see the children's
17 reaction to them. A few have been a little bit afraid
18 of BAC[®], but overall, they're not. And if you get real
19 animated people in the costumes, then it works
20 wonderfully well because then they can get the message
21 out there, and showing Thermy[™], basically, fighting
22 BAC[®], and the correct temperatures helps you fight, if
23 there's bacteria present in the food. And the mobile,
24 basically, we're bringing the experts to the consumers.
25 We feel our outreach has really expanded. We're

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1 reaching people at a grassroots level that we may not
2 have been able to reach before. And, in fact, I know we
3 are because we work often times through educators and
4 information multipliers. But to get out there and to be
5 able to talk one-on-one with consumers at the grocery
6 store, at state fairs, sporting events, different things
7 where the common, every-day consumer is present, it's
8 really wonderful. And we're learning from them, too,
9 issues of concern that they might have, questions that
10 they might have about food safety, but they wouldn't
11 have thought about calling the USDA Meat and Poultry
12 hotline, which, you know, has been there since 1985, and
13 we do get a lot of calls to the hotline from consumers,
14 but this just takes it one step further and helps us to
15 get the food safety message out there. And this is a
16 listing of upcoming events. As you can see, our
17 calendar is very full. And, actually, those are like
18 major events. And what our scheduler does, we contact
19 people within that area or, often times, they're
20 contacting us now. And we have, in your packets of
21 information, there's an email address, or you can just
22 go up on the web site and contact us and say, I
23 understand you're going to be in the Iowa State Fair.
24 Well, I'm so many miles from that. I've having this
25 event. Could the mobile come by? And if it's possible,

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1 we will do that. And sometimes we have two and three
2 events a day. And that is a lot of work on our staff
3 because you have to set up and break down and get to
4 each event. But so far we've all had a good time with
5 it. And our scheduler is a tall, slender young lady and
6 I think we're really stretching her even more so. I
7 figure by the end of the summer, we're just going to
8 have a hard time finding her. But if you have questions
9 or want further information, Susan Conley is the
10 Director of Food Safety Education, as I'm sure you're
11 all aware, and Laura Reiser is the young lady that's
12 coordinating the schedule. And -- but the whole Food
13 Safety Education staff has worked very hard to make this
14 project a success. And it's an ongoing project. It's
15 not going to stop like in the fall. We have things
16 scheduled, probably, maybe one month it might not be on
17 the road because weather conditions can determine a lot
18 of that. But when the weather is bad in the north,
19 we'll be in the south. And so we're planning
20 accordingly so that we can get out there and work with
21 consumers and provide education for them. And that,
22 essentially, is the end of the PowerPoint and that's,
23 actually, the back side of the mobile. And as you can
24 see, it's been very cleverly designed, and that's the
25 number to call. 1-888-MPHOTLINE. And we're tracking to

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1 see how many people actually see that. And, so far,
2 nobody's called. We're wondering if people will see the
3 number, and driving alongside, call on your cell phone
4 and think they're talking to the mobile, and then
5 actually be talking to Beltsville, our hot line. And
6 but it's getting out there, and so it's an easy number
7 to remember. And now we have the web site. So we're
8 telling people all the time how they can communicate
9 with us and how we can respond to their questions and
10 concerns. Now I have a little video I'd like to show
11 you on -- pertaining to the launch, then a real quick
12 one on the Tennessee event with Wynona Judd, and then
13 this wonderful PSA that we've done with Heather, former
14 Miss America, 1995, Heather Whitestone McCullum, and
15 she's done a PSA on the four "Fight BAC[®]" messages, and
16 it's a wonderful, very powerful educational tool. So
17 we're doing the videos. Could we do them, please? This
18 shows it from the very beginning. [Showing video] And,
19 especially, this last, the PSA with Heather, is going to
20 be very effective. It's going to be released very soon,
21 and we want to target children with our messages, and
22 parents of young children, and this will be a wonderful
23 vehicle that we can use in order to accomplish that
24 goal. If you have any questions, I'd be glad to try and
25 answer them. If not, you can email your concerns or

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1 something. Yes, sir.

2 MR. KOWALCYK: Michael Kowalcyk from STOP. As
3 a member of STOP and a founding member of Dade County
4 Chapter in Wisconsin, I'd like to compliment FSIS on
5 this effort to educate as many consumers as possible.
6 When we set up our chapter, our primary focus was,
7 because of the high risk to young children, was to work
8 with our local educators to ensure that in their health
9 curriculum, food safety was thoroughly addressed. And I
10 think what you're doing is commendable. In looking at
11 the schedule and looking at the PSA and the promotional
12 video, it seems like the attendance at fairs, many of
13 which where there is food sold at the fairs, there seems
14 to be an opportunity to also interact with the food
15 handlers at these events. Is your group looking into
16 ways to work with food handlers that they're reminded
17 that, yes, consumers need to know that if they get
18 something and it's not cooked, to take it back? But,
19 however, the people handling the food behind the
20 counter, it seems that there's a very good opportunity
21 to interact with those folks as well, especially at the
22 county fair level, state fair level.

23 MS. O'BRIEN: We do interact with the local
24 health departments, and we try and notify them when
25 we're coming into their area, and as far as education

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1 for food handlers, the Agency has been involved in that
2 for quite a while now, and we have the Food Safety
3 Training and Education Alliance, that's FSTE. It's an
4 alliance in the government, industry and trade
5 organizations that deal with educating food service
6 workers. And we have assumed a very active role in that
7 particular alliance. I've been involved with that for
8 several years. We're involved with the Conference for
9 Food Protection. There is now -- educating food service
10 handlers is quite a challenge, as anybody in the food
11 service arena knows, especially with the high turnover,
12 the language barriers that you encounter. And the
13 International Association for Food Protection has
14 recently come out with some international food safety
15 icons which we were on the -- provided input to the task
16 force on that, and we feel that these icons will be
17 effective educational tools to help supplement what is
18 going on at the local level. And the Surf Safe Program
19 is out there. There are many other programs. And the
20 locals do try and educate the food handlers. By using
21 international icons, it will, hopefully, trigger. You
22 know, you'll see something for washing your hands. They
23 came up with ten different concepts, and developed icons
24 that would reflect these concepts. And they are out
25 there for use by people in the food service industry.

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1 And if we find that maybe we should go back to the
2 drawing board on one of them, one or two of them, that's
3 fine too. They are out there. We want to see if they
4 work, if they are effective. If they do impact the food
5 handlers' behavior. And that is quite a challenge.
6 And, yes, we do focus on food handlers too, but we
7 interact, we try to interact as much as we can with the
8 local health departments, with the trade associations,
9 and with the Food and Drug Administration, which
10 provides the model, the FDA food code that the states
11 and local health establishments use to formulate their
12 regulations.

13 MR. KOWALCYK: Okay, thank you.

14 MS. O'BRIEN: Um-hum. Yes, ma'am.

15 DR. LEECH: Irene Leech. Great job.

16 MS. O'BRIEN: Oh, thank you.

17 DR. LEECH: Thank you for sharing that. It's
18 super to see all the interconnections and so forth. One
19 more that you probably have done, just to throw in, your
20 state food safety committees of various kinds?

21 MS. O'BRIEN: Yes. Yes.

22 DR. LEECH: And I'll bet you're connecting
23 with them as well then.

24 MS. O'BRIEN: Yeah. Yeah.

25 DR. LEECH: And thank you for sharing that PSA

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1 with us. That's -- and thank you all for including that
2 on the agenda because I think that's the kind of thing
3 that's really super for us to see and for all of us to
4 feel good about...

5 MS. O'BRIEN: Yeah. Right.

6 DR. LEECH: ...something that's happening. So
7 congratulations. That's all super.

8 MS. O'BRIEN: Thank you. I feel that we have
9 wonderful food safety education programs, we have
10 tremendous support from the Administration. Dr. McKee
11 supports everything that we do, and provides guidance.
12 So does Dr. Murano. And I just feel that we function
13 very effectively as a team and as part of a public
14 health agency to help educate consumers and reduce food-
15 borne illness.

16 MR. TYNAN: Okay, Sandra?

17 MS. ESKIN: Yes, I have a couple questions.

18 MS. O'BRIEN: Sure.

19 MS. ESKIN: One is feedback. Do you have any
20 sort of formal mechanism, whether it's a survey, or just
21 like an out-take interview, to get a sense of what
22 messages consumers who visit the mobile are getting,
23 and...

24 MS. O'BRIEN: Well, we're doing some tracking
25 of media, and that is a numerical tracking. And there's

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1 spot, obviously, the message that they retain five
2 minutes after they leave the mobile...

3 MS. O'BRIEN: Right. Right. Yeah.

4 MS. ESKIN: ...and what they do a week or a
5 month later may be different.

6 MS. O'BRIEN: Right. But

7 DR. LEECH: I'd be shocked if the Extension
8 partners are not doing...

9 MS. O'BRIEN: I was going to say, often times
10 the Extension...

11 DR. LEECH: They are required to have that
12 kind of...

13 MS. O'BRIEN: ...I was just going to say, the
14 Extension...

15 DR. LEECH: ...Extension, a part of their
16 grants...

17 MS. O'BRIEN: Yeah, they have to have an
18 evaluation component as part of their grants, and so
19 that's why we work very closely with them. We don't
20 want to reinvent the wheel. And we're partnering with
21 them so that we can utilize -- effectively utilize and
22 leverage all the resources that are out there.

23 MS. ESKIN: Right. My second question is,
24 it's important, obviously, to target young children
25 because they will grow up to be food handlers. I'm just

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1 curious, when you talk -- when you address materials to
2 them, the goal is, since many of them, at ten and under,
3 aren't food preparers in their household, is to send the
4 message to their parents, those -- is that sort of...

5 MS. O'BRIEN: Yes. Yes.

6 MS. ESKIN: ...implicit or explicit in the
7 message that you're giving them?

8 MS. O'BRIEN: Right, we -- we're finding that
9 children, you know, can carry the message home to their
10 parents. And in our thermometer education campaign,
11 we're focusing specifically on a segment of the
12 population, the parents of young children. And we're in
13 the process of developing messages targeting the
14 children and the parents to see, and we'll evaluate that
15 and see how effective that is. There are many
16 challenges out there, as you know, and...

17 MS. ESKIN: Sure.

18 MS. O'BRIEN: ...we're -- hopefully, we'll see
19 a decrease in the statistics from CDC or the incidents
20 of food-borne illness, and I'd like to say that that is
21 a measure also that people are doing things right.

22 MS. ESKIN: But again, you know, the children
23 can be very effective...

24 MS. O'BRIEN: Absolutely.

25 MS. ESKIN: ...messengers, whether...

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1 MS. O'BRIEN: Correct.

2 MS. ESKIN: ...it's mom, dad, you don't have
3 your seatbelt on...

4 MS. O'BRIEN: Um-hum.

5 MS. ESKIN: ...to, you know...

6 MS. O'BRIEN: Right. And that social
7 marketing, exactly what you're talking about...

8 MS. ESKIN: Sure.

9 MS. O'BRIEN: ...the seatbelt campaign,
10 drinking campaign...

11 MS. ESKIN: Sure.

12 MS. O'BRIEN: ...the five a day, those all
13 incorporate social marketing.

14 MS. ESKIN: Right.

15 MS. O'BRIEN: And we want to market our
16 educational products to consumers.

17 MS. ESKIN: Right. And my last question here
18 is, in the brochure that we received...

19 MS. O'BRIEN: Uh-huh.

20 MS. ESKIN: ...you do mention, in the very
21 middle, that consumers will find out what the federal
22 government, local authorities and industry are doing to
23 make sure the food supply is safe. Do you have
24 material? How is that message transmitted for people
25 who walk into the mobile? Is -- are there materials

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1 that explain the role? I know -- understand that the
2 direct message relates to consumer behavior, but this is
3 an important opportunity and an important piece of a
4 larger picture.

5 MS. O'BRIEN: Often times that gets discussed
6 with consumers when they have questions. But we do
7 have, in one of the photos there, there was a picture of
8 a stand that has food safety publications, publications
9 on them, and we do have some information relating to
10 what the Agency does too, and in my experience, when I
11 was out in Indianapolis, that's where I had the one-on-
12 one with people. And, actually, they -- that was around
13 the Mad Cow Disease incident up in Canada, so we had
14 questions about, you know, what is US -- what is the
15 United States doing. And so this is where you have that
16 one-on-one. And as far as food security goes, we have -
17 - the Agency's already provided information for
18 industry. We are developing some information for
19 consumers too, that as we get new publications, they'll
20 be on the mobile, and they'll be out there, and we'll be
21 distributing them and discussing them.

22 MS. ESKIN: So again, when, obviously, you
23 don't have the mobile here for to tour ourselves, but
24 when they walk inside...

25 MS. O'BRIEN: No, no, no, no. They do not go

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1 inside.

2 MS. ESKIN: It's all exterior?

3 MS. O'BRIEN: It's all exterior. The
4 demonstrations, everything's outside. Yeah, that one
5 picture, I wanted to clarify that.

6 MS. ESKIN: Oh, it's confusing.

7 MS. O'BRIEN: The only one that goes inside,
8 basically, are the staff people that are working there.
9 If the Under Secretary's there and she'd choose to
10 conduct an interview, a media interview or something.
11 It -- I don't know how many have ever been in an RV.
12 It's -- we have not really changed the interior of the
13 RV because we wanted to get our show on the road, our
14 mobile messaging...

15 MS. ESKIN: Um-hum.

16 MS. O'BRIEN: ...and to do it in the most
17 timely manner, we got a standard RV.

18 MS. ESKIN: Um-hum.

19 MS. O'BRIEN: And, but it's not used for
20 anything except storage and office space. And if the
21 Secretary or Dr. McKee or somebody wanted to conduct an
22 interview inside, then that would be the perfect place
23 for them to do it. But, no. And that's a question,
24 especially little kids, can we go inside...

25 MS. ESKIN: Right.

1 MS. O'BRIEN: ...and see what the mobile is
2 about? And we steer them away from that because you
3 have enough little activities and things for children,
4 and we're always looking at other ways to bring -- to
5 draw people into the mobile, and make it fun, but
6 educational too.

7 MR. TYNAN: Thank you.

8 MS. O'BRIEN: Okay. Any other questions?
9 Well, thanks for your attention. I know you -- I'm the
10 last one here, and everybody's thinking lunch and going
11 home, so I really appreciate your being responsive.
12 Thank you.

13 MR. TYNAN: Thank you, Barbara. And if
14 anybody would like to audition for the BAC[®] or
15 Thermy[™]...

16 MS. O'BRIEN: Um-hum. Yeah, just see me.

17 MR. TYNAN: ...Barbara will take your names
18 and be in contact with you.

19 DR. MCKEE: I'd just like to add one thing.
20 We are monitoring the 888 number that's listed on there
21 for the call ins and we're looking at the increases and
22 where those are coming from as a first start in
23 documenting increased consumer awareness. I like to
24 call it the BAC[®] Mobile, so...

25 MS. O'BRIEN: USDA Food Safety Mobile.

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1 MR. TYNAN: We were going to put that on the
2 agenda, but they wouldn't let me, so we had to be a
3 little bit more formal.

4 DR. McKEE: Well, BAC[®] has got a nickname,
5 so...

6 MR. TYNAN: I think that actually completes
7 the agenda, with the exception of public comments. We
8 had a registration form outside. Yesterday we had a
9 couple of folks that registered to comment. Today we
10 did not, so I'd just maybe solicit it from the...

11 DR. McKEE: Yeah, if we could, if there's
12 further comment, and I'd like to limit the comments
13 initially to five minutes, and so I'll open that up now
14 for public comment before we have closing remarks.
15 Okay, seeing none, I want to thank the committee for all
16 the good work that you've done. These are weighty
17 issues for us. It's very important that we have your
18 input, your ideas. I know that it's a sacrifice out of
19 your time to come and help us, and we sincerely
20 appreciate it. And we will take the information that
21 got back to management council and develop strategies in
22 order to take your good ideas forward. So, with that, I
23 thank you and look forward to our next meeting. And
24 Robert will be the coordinator of information and so
25 forth going out. And before I close, are there any

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1 other last comments or last questions? Okay, well thank
2 you very much. We appreciate it.

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DATE: JUNE 24, 2003

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