

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEAT AND POULTRY
 INSPECTION

PLENARY SESSION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2004

The Advisory Committee met in Salon A in the Hilton Old Town, 1767 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia, at 8:30 a.m., Dr. Barbara Masters, Acting Administrator, Food Safety and Inspection Service, presiding.

PRESENT

BARBARA MASTERS	Chair
GLADYS S. BAYSE	Committee Member
DAVID F. CARPENTER	Committee Member
JAMES H. DENTON	Committee Member
DARIN DETWILER	Committee Member
KEVIN M. ELFERING	Committee Member
SANDRA B. ESKIN	Committee Member
MICHAEL W. GROVO	Committee Member
JOSEPH H. HARRIS	Committee Member
JILL HOLLINGSWORTH	Committee Member
MICHAEL E. KOWALCYK	Committee Member
CHARLES M. LINK	Committee Member
MARK P. SCHAD	Committee Member

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

2 (8:53 a.m.)

3 MR. TYNAN: Now that we've worked out our
4 technical glitches, perhaps it would be in our best
5 interests to get started. I sincerely apologize for
6 the delay. As you would expect, we were here very
7 early trying to get everything set up so that we
8 would be right on time, and we have computers. You
9 can't live with them, and you can't live without
10 them, I guess, so we're going to start going through
11 the various reports. I'm going to allow Dr. Masters,
12 perhaps, to make a couple of opening remarks in terms
13 of what we did yesterday, and then we'll jump into
14 Dr. Denton's group, and we'll go from there. Dr.
15 Masters.

16 DR. MASTERS: We'll just do it from here,
17 perhaps. Okay. Just very briefly to catch us
18 perhaps back up quickly on the schedule.

19 For anyone that wasn't with us yesterday, we
20 had three groups that spent the better part of the
21 afternoon deliberating, and we're very appreciative
22 for the work that they did. The groups were

1 answering some questions to provide some advice to
2 our Agency. One was working on what is the best use
3 of data to support risk-based inspection, answering
4 questions such as, how can we have other interested
5 parties contribute information to our Agency that can
6 contribute to risk assessments, for example, help us
7 to predict -- use data in a more predictive way, and
8 also to help us allocate our resources in a better,
9 more constructive fashion.

10 So that was kind of the challenge we gave to
11 that group, and that was chaired by Dr. Denton. Our
12 second committee then looked at our Technical Service
13 Center. We have reached a point in time at our
14 Technical Service Center that they have reached a new
15 point in their evolution. They have been providing
16 technical assistance to establishments as we
17 implemented HACCP over the last several years, have
18 done an outstanding job in that area, and we are
19 recognizing now in their evolution as we start
20 evaluating the design of establishments' HACCP plans
21 as an agency and start looking at that as an area
22 ourselves. We made a determination to move the

1 Technical Service Center to our policy staff in
2 April.

3 The Technical Service Center is starting to
4 look internally as they provide service to all of our
5 constituent groups and had a series of questions to
6 ask the Committee to see if there are ways that they
7 could provide better assistance. One, should they
8 continue to provide assistance to establishments? Is
9 there ways they could more effectively assist other
10 constituent groups? Is there ways that they can
11 enhance their service? So they were really looking
12 for some good guidance on how they could better
13 assist as a Technical Service Center.

14 Then finally, we -- and we had Mr. -- Joe, you
15 did that one right? Dr. Joe Harris working with that
16 group as the Chair. Then finally we had a group
17 working on training and outreach. We, as an Agency,
18 have been working and trying to work effectively and
19 efficiently to share information with all of our
20 constituent groups as far as training and outreach,
21 and Ms. Mary Cutshall shared some of the things that
22 we have been doing and some of our ideas on how we

1 can effectively and efficiently reach some of our
2 constituent groups, and so she shared some of the
3 ideas that we had, but we were looking to the group
4 to share some of their ideas to talk about some of
5 the technologies that we could use, how we could
6 better reach some of our constituent groups.

7 Mr. Derfler shared a concern how we could
8 effectively reach even more of our consumer groups.
9 Oftentimes it's just the industry groups that take
10 advantage of our efforts, and we were looking to see
11 how we might even more effectively reach all of our
12 constituent groups.

13 So we asked this group to give some ideas to us
14 how we could more effectively and efficiently share
15 information throughout region training and to give a
16 lot of ideas in that area. We had Mr. Govro chair
17 that subcommittee.

18 Those groups worked all afternoon, and we look
19 forward to hearing some of the ideas that they bring
20 to us, so with that, we'll turn it over to the
21 groups.

22 MR. TYNAN: In the interest of being

1 flexible beyond belief this morning, it appears that
2 we saved the same report twice with different names,
3 so in the interests of time, I'm going to propose
4 that we hold Dr. Denton, if you wouldn't object,
5 yours to be the last. We are going to do Group
6 Number 2 and then Group Number 3. We'll take a quick
7 break, and I will correct the computer glitch, and we
8 will do Number 3 - Number 1 last, but certainly not
9 least. If that's agreeable to everybody. Okay.

10 Then if we could, if we could begin with the
11 Technical Service Center, and we will start with
12 that, and maybe if I could ask Dr. Harris to -- let's
13 see if the light works this morning. Doing great.

14 DR. HARRIS: Well, I did notice in
15 looking at the reports this morning that we were the
16 only ones who were not proud enough of our report to
17 put our names on it, so if you look at all the other
18 reports and see which names are missing, that was our
19 subcommittee. Actually I want to thank the
20 subcommittee members going around: Deanna Baldwin,
21 Sandra Eskin, David Carpenter, and Lee Jan who
22 couldn't be here this morning. I want to thank all

1 of those individuals for working really hard with
2 this, and we tried to sound task as much as we can.
3 We kind of deviated once in awhile, but I think we
4 had an excellent discussion.

5 I also want to thank Dr. Isabel Arrington for
6 kind of being our resident expert when we had
7 questions about the Technical Service Center to kind
8 of help guide us and inform us. Not all of us were -
9 - are daily users of the Technical Service Center, so
10 it helped to have someone there who could kind of
11 help describe for us how things are routinely done
12 when we had questions about that.

13 With that in mind, kind of proceeding through
14 the questions that we were asked to take a look at,
15 and we tried to avoid one-word answers, although the
16 first one was an emphatic yes. Should the Technical
17 Service Center continue to provide technical
18 assistance to establishments? We absolutely felt
19 that that is a valuable tool that the Tech Service
20 Center provides, and it should be continued, and we
21 kind of have some statements there. We applaud the
22 Agency for setting it up and having it serve the

1 function that it serves. It has really become a
2 trusted source of information.

3 I know from an industry prospective, in the
4 firms that I work with, they are very comfortable in
5 calling the Technical Center for assistance. They
6 are not nearly so comfortable calling other entities
7 within the Agency. They perceive the Tech Center to
8 be an unbiased source of information for both
9 industry and the Agency, and that we think that there
10 is a lot of value in that. Also, we're most
11 appreciative of the responsiveness of the Tech
12 Service Center. I think during the presentation
13 yesterday you heard Dr. Arrington talk about -- they
14 have every question answered within 24 hours, or at
15 least responded to if not answered. Sometimes
16 answers don't happen in 24 hours, and I think we all
17 understand that, so in that regard, absolutely,
18 completely supported.

19 Now, obviously the next part of that question
20 is, well, if it's going to continue, what could it do
21 better? After some extensive deliberation on this --
22 we probably spent more time on this question I think

1 than any other in terms of ways to make it better, we
2 came up with several suggestions or recommendations,
3 the first being to work on improving the consistency
4 of answers by developing and making available more
5 question and answer papers in response to frequently
6 asked questions especially when new initiatives,
7 notices, new policies are rolled out from
8 headquarters. That seems to be an especially
9 opportune time to develop Q and A's.

10 We're very aware that that has gone on and
11 continues to go on. We would like - our
12 recommendation is to just make even enhanced use of
13 that format for disseminating information. We think
14 that would be a valuable tool. We well acknowledge
15 that a challenge - anytime you've got a large group
16 of people responding to questions, a challenge is
17 going to continue to be trying to make sure they're
18 all giving the same answers to the same questions,
19 and we felt like that is a valuable tool for helping
20 to achieve that goal.

21 The second recommendation was to compile
22 helpful resources for use by establishments. Things

1 like research citations, new technology letters that
2 have been disseminated or issued, process parameters
3 for effectiveness. Specifically, we talked a lot
4 about different interventions and different things
5 that are very commonly used in our industry, and
6 particularly smaller firms really struggle for proper
7 validation information on that technology even though
8 they're using it the same way everyone else is, and
9 we thought that anything that the Technical Service
10 Center could do to help compile or be a source of
11 useful information like that we really felt like
12 would be useful.

13 Number three, capture customer feedback on
14 service through both formal and informal surveys,
15 particularly pertaining to the effectiveness of the
16 service, the consistency and the timeliness of the
17 response. We sort of talked about the example of
18 almost any technical support entity that we deal
19 with, and I think in this day and time, all of us
20 deal with tech support in some form or fashion.

21 It seems like one of the questions that always
22 arises is, before you're done they say a survey-type

1 question -- did you get what you wanted? Were we
2 able to fix your problem? If not, were we able to
3 direct you to the right resources? So anything like
4 that, and we -- I know Dr. Masters suggested
5 yesterday we should be very specific, and we weren't
6 on the mechanism for doing this because we thought
7 there might be a lot of opportunities, and maybe we
8 weren't the best group to describe the specifics on
9 how that should happen.

10 One of the things that we learned, I think,
11 during the course of discussions, we really were -- I
12 wasn't, and I don't think most of the subcommittee
13 members were aware of some of the correlation
14 activities that occur through the Technical Service
15 Center, and in talking about that, we thought that
16 might be another unique opportunity for the Tech
17 Center to expand their formal correlation efforts in
18 reaching out to both inspectors, district offices as
19 well as plant management.

20 On-site correlation should be done routinely
21 and not just necessarily when a request is made, also
22 a variety of subjects. Typically I think most of the

1 correlations as we understand it have dealt with
2 pathology and disposition. We think that there may
3 be a lot of other opportunities to provide some
4 correlation activities. Obviously, that could
5 include development of photographs or other materials
6 and doesn't actually show up in this particular
7 statement, but we talked about the possibility for
8 utilizing new technologies like webcasts and other
9 technology to have some of those activities occur.

10 Finally, our fifth recommendation was to
11 continue to increase the use of e-mail communication
12 with constituents. One of the things about e-mail
13 responses is you get the question and the answer both
14 in writing, and that can be used, we thought, as
15 another tool for helping ensure consistency, helping
16 ensure that when there is a question asked, and the
17 question and answer are both responded in writing,
18 there can be -- it will minimize the opportunity for
19 misinterpretation. I won't say that it can't be
20 misinterpreted by any stretch because we can all do
21 that, but that way we thought that would be another
22 valuable tool.

1 Do you want to through the entire report, or do
2 we want to discuss just a section at a time?

3 MR. TYNAN: Well why don't we stop now
4 and see if there is any comments at this point.

5 MR. ELFERING: I just have one quick
6 question. This is for Dr. Arrington. How many
7 individuals do you have taking calls?

8 DR. ARRINGTON: Every staff officer --
9 every technical staff officer is available to take
10 calls if they are in the office and if they are not
11 doing something else that we have told them there's
12 some other priority than taking the call, and that
13 might be that we get a request to work on a notice and
14 get comments by the end of the day. In that case, we
15 may have one or two or three people working on that.
16 When they're doing that then they wouldn't take calls,
17 but otherwise they are available to make the call. I
18 think there are so many actual bodies on a given day.

19 I can't estimate that because it varies some, how
20 many are on travel, how many are on leave, that sort
21 of thing.

22 Do I have to repeat all that?

1 Let me try and think. I'd say on my staff, oh,
2 somewhere between 10 and 20 people are usually around,
3 although we'll have some Fridays where we only have
4 five or six people, and then the volume of the calls
5 varies from day to day.

6 MR. ELFERING: Okay, thanks.

7 MR. TYNAN: Yes, Mr. Link.

8 MR. LINK: Charles Link, Cargill. My
9 question is probably to Dr. Arrington as well, or
10 maybe it's a comment, but would it be helpful, or I
11 think it would be helpful for me, to know who the
12 people are, and if they have particular areas of
13 expertise. If it's a question on export issues or a
14 question on beef versus poultry. If they are folks
15 that you could kind of -- or that I could direct my
16 questions towards and at least know I'm getting into
17 the right area of the tech center. So it would be
18 helpful to me, maybe it's a point, maybe it's not,
19 but to have that list of people and what their areas
20 of expertise are, so if you've got it broken down
21 that way. I'm not sure that you do, but it might be
22 helpful.

1 DR. ARRINGTON: We try not to do that,
2 although in reality there are certain stamp officers
3 that know more about certain areas than other stamp
4 officers do, but part of we try to do is to have
5 everybody to strive to know something about everything
6 so that when the phone rings, and in our case it's an
7 overhead announcement of a call, someone doesn't say -
8 - when they say the call is on slaughter, that people
9 say, well, slaughter's not my area, I don't have to
10 worry, don't pick up the phone, and it turns out that
11 day we have maybe two people that are really good in
12 slaughter, and they happen to be doing something else
13 or if they are already on a call, so we try to balance
14 that, but I can understand you just want a general
15 idea of who to go to, and we may be able to do
16 something like that to say in general.

17 Also if that person or group of people are on
18 leave or on travel, do you want to go to voice mail,
19 or do you just want to say if that person is not there
20 --

21 MR. TYNAN: I'm sorry?

22 DR. ARRINGTON: Mr. Schad has a question.

1 MR. TYNAN: I'm sorry, Mark.

2 MR. SCHAD: I'm just going to back up
3 what Charles has said here just from an industry
4 prospective. I think that it would be very helpful
5 if you had people that specialize in certain areas,
6 and I see nothing wrong with if you said, well, that
7 person that specializes in that area is not available
8 at this time, but we'll be sure to get back with you
9 in 24 hours, which is what happens with e-mails a
10 lot. You will send in a question by e-mail and say -
11 - you'll get immediate response that we don't have
12 the answer right now, but we will have that answer
13 within 24 hours. I just wanted to back up what
14 Charles was saying just from an industry prospective
15 that would really be helpful.

16 DR. ARRINGTON: And that is to ensure
17 you're getting an answer that is thorough and accurate
18 and consistent and you won't have to call back again.

19 Is that -- okay.

20 MR. TYNAN: Any other comments up to this
21 point? Then I'll let Dr. Harris proceed with his
22 presentation.

1 DR. HARRIS: The next question that we
2 were asked to address, how can the Technical Service
3 Center effectively assist the Agency's other
4 constituent groups, including states, consumers, and
5 academia? We spent some time discussing this, and I
6 think we were all pretty much in agreement that the
7 Tech Center is the appropriate location for technical
8 information pertaining to Agency policies. With that
9 being said, we also fully acknowledge it's not the
10 appropriate phone call if one wants to know how long
11 to cook the holiday turkey, so we're a little bit
12 kind of tried to narrow the focus and talk about what
13 kinds of information that the Tech Center is
14 appropriate for them to provide to these various
15 groups versus maybe other spots in the Agency that
16 would be the more appropriate communicator with those
17 groups.

18 Really, as I think Sandra pointed out, it's not
19 necessarily always the constituent group as much as
20 it is the nature of the information that that
21 constituent group is looking for. In a case like --
22 the example that Sandra used was as a consumer, she

1 may have an interest in commenting on a regulation or
2 really be looking for technical information relative
3 to Agency policy. We thought that that was still the
4 appropriate location for any interested party to get
5 technical information about Agency policies.

6 I guess I better quit rambling here and read
7 the actual recommendation:

8 The Subcommittee recommends that the Agency
9 more broadly publicize the existence of the Technical
10 Service Center. A particularly effective way to do
11 this would be to place a direct link to the Technical
12 Service Center on the FSIS's home page. The link
13 should clarify that the TSC's role is to answer a
14 technical question relating to policies and
15 procedures, not to answer specific questions about
16 food storage, handling, preparation practices, which
17 can be handled through either the Meat and Poultry
18 Hotline or another entity, or to resolve disputes
19 between inspection personnel and plant management,
20 which obviously need to be decided by inspection
21 supervisory personnel.

22 That was kind of the summation of our response

1 to that question.

2 DR. HARRIS: Okay, why don't you proceed
3 on to the next one while we figure out what the
4 technology problems are.

5 DR. MASTERS: I going to ask a question
6 real quick. This is Barb Masters. We had the link
7 there, and something that comes to mind and see if
8 this would help, and maybe I'm directing it maybe to
9 Ms. Eskin since she seems to have an idea is if we
10 did like a feature maybe occasionally just to say
11 this exists. Just to remind folks and put a feature
12 there the Tech Service Center exists.

13 Occasionally you know how like we have press
14 releases or whatever and perhaps put a picture like
15 of our Tech Service Center and did like almost like a
16 press release or a bullet just to remind folks. Is
17 that something that would help maybe just to -- with
18 an 800 number and kind of the unique aspects of our
19 Tech Service Center and what they do. Is that
20 something like what you had in mind?

21 MS. ESKIN: I think that makes sense.
22 Currently you said there's a link. Where is that on

1 the page? Does it say Tech Center?

2 DR. MASTERS: Right, there's multiple
3 places --

4 MS. ESKIN: Rather than saying like even
5 have a leading question. If you have a question
6 about policies, click here. I think it's great to
7 have it there, but if people - like we were talking
8 that it actually is on the bottom of directives, and
9 I kind of said oh, it is? A lot of times, people
10 don't make it that far.

11 DR. MASTERS: A couple of things. A
12 little easier to find but then also maybe a couple of
13 times feature it just to --

14 MS. ESKIN: Yes.

15 DR. MASTERS: So those who use it
16 frequently would see the feature and then have it an
17 easier way to find it.

18 MS. ESKIN: Again, if the goal is to
19 direct people to the Tech Center and then they maybe
20 to have one more call as opposed to call four or five
21 different places. I'm trying to think also if the
22 home page has a link. I think it does now, to key

1 officials like --

2 DR. MASTERS: Yes.

3 MS. ESKIN: Anything like that that can
4 be put on your home page, because I assume that's
5 where most people would logically start.

6 DR. MASTERS: Okay, great. Good
7 suggestion, thank you.

8 MR. TYNAN: Any other comments? Dr.
9 Harris.

10 DR. HARRIS: The final question that we
11 addressed, in what new and enhanced ways can FSIS use
12 the Tech Service Center to ensure that the Agency
13 realizes the full benefits offered by this unit?
14 Obviously, that's a list - we came up with a list of
15 things. There are probably many others that we
16 didn't think of, but the ones that we came up with
17 were -- again this -- there will be a little overlap
18 between this and what we said on maximizing
19 effectiveness in the first one, develop and
20 disseminate additional Q and A documents on issues,
21 technical issues, expansion of the use of the
22 correlation sessions. Again, this is I guess where

1 we dealt with utilizing technology to help facilitate
2 those. Encourage broad participation in those
3 sessions.

4 I think a lot of times correlation sessions go
5 on that would be of value to a lot of people that may
6 or may not necessarily be exposed to, and as an
7 industry person, I really wasn't even aware that the
8 Tech Service Center did those types of activities, so
9 there may be some really good opportunities for that
10 to occur.

11 Whenever possible, conduct technical meetings
12 again utilizing whatever technologies are
13 appropriate. The Tech Center in the past on a couple
14 of occasions has hosted technical conferences. We
15 thought that is a particularly appropriate use of
16 that facility or that -- I shouldn't say facility,
17 it's not a building -- but that component of the
18 Agency, and there might be some opportunity to expand
19 the use of that particularly as the web casting
20 technology becomes available and much more easy and
21 cost-effective to use.

22 Continue to do more summarization of user

1 feedback and data and responses on a quarterly basis.
2 Kind of give people an idea on a quarterly basis of
3 what are the key questions coming in? What is the
4 call volume? Are there a lot of questions? Has it
5 fallen off? Maybe make that more available.

6 Coordinate with the Agency to update the list
7 of state HACCP coordinators and regularly disseminate
8 new information to them as it becomes available. The
9 Agency has a very good list, a state-by-state list of
10 coordinators, and we were kind of -- most of us were
11 unaware of any recent activity that has gone on much
12 with that list of coordinators, and we thought that
13 if that list could be updated as needed and the Tech
14 Center could proactively communicate with those
15 coordinators on a regular basis, would be a good way
16 to help get information out there across the country.

17 Finally, the subcommittee strongly encourages
18 the Office of Policy to ensure all Tech Service
19 Center staff have advanced copies of all new policy
20 documents including notices and directives before
21 they become publicly available.

22 There were some in the room including myself

1 who had had experiences in when a new notice or
2 directive would come out and be available on the
3 website, call in the Tech Center and then not have
4 any idea what I was calling about or them being
5 unaware that that was already published, so we felt
6 especially since it's now aligned with the Office of
7 Policies that that would be particularly appropriate
8 that they get at least a few minutes' head start on
9 us.

10 That's the end of my report.

11 MR. TYNAN: Any comments. Mr. Link?

12 MR. LINK: Charles Link. This is, I
13 guess, directed to you, Dr. Harris, and your
14 committee, but would it be appropriate to include a
15 Bullet No. 6 under Question 2 to suggest that names,
16 areas of expertise, be made available for the
17 industry or for consumer groups or for whoever has a
18 question on allergens or exports, or at least know
19 where to get them besides the Tech Center?

20 DR. ARRINGTON: Okay, and then I would do
21 when I ask a question. We get a certain number of
22 export questions. We do have I'd say two or three

1 people that have extensively answered them in the past
2 and have a very strong background in it. Okay. Of
3 those two or three people, two of them also travel
4 quite a bit because they're also very talented in some
5 other areas. If they are not there, do you want to --
6 I mean, so we're going to have to have somebody else
7 answer the call unless you want to wait the week or
8 the two weeks or the three days or whatever it is that
9 the person -- those people get back. Or I may have
10 one of those people I really want them working on the
11 zero tolerance correlation, not taking export calls.
12 So could we -- would that be I guess our internal
13 mechanism or to let people know that although we have
14 the expertise that we still expect to get questions
15 answered whether those people are there or not.

16 This is more just a discussion thing than --

17 MR. LINK: I think it's helpful to at least know
18 these are the three people, but if they're gone, there
19 is a fall-back position, and if I'm okay to wait a
20 week, then we can wait a week, but I just think it
21 would be useful to know who they are what their -- if
22 there is someone that is the export expert to be able

1 to go to them and try to get answers pretty quickly.

2 So I don't know. Maybe I was just being kind of
3 personal bias, but I think it would be helpful, and
4 Mark at least backed me up a little bit too from his
5 prospective, so I don't know from an industry
6 prospective I think it's helpful to have that.

7 Would I take the next guy in line? Sure.
8 Absolutely. It depends on the criticality of the
9 issue, I guess, and how quickly I need an answer.

10 DR. ARRINGTON: Right, because if you have
11 very sensitive issues or very critical, you, of
12 course, also go to the supervisors with those when
13 it's very critical or a staff officer will say this is
14 very critical. We need to have that conversation.

15 MR. TYNAN: Could I ask what does the
16 rest of the committee think regarding that suggestion
17 that Mr. Link made about adding a sixth bullet? Are
18 you in agreement that that is an addition that should
19 be made?

20 MR. SCHAD: This is Mark Schad. I'll
21 back up Charles on that one.

22 MR. LINK: Thank you, Mark.

1 MR. TYNAN: A show of hands, yes. Yes.

2 DR. CARPENTER: To do new updating to
3 make sure it includes all those experts, those you
4 consider to be experts in particular areas up to
5 annual or quarterly basis to make sure that the
6 constituents realize that the best resources are on
7 that list. That might be a challenge to keep that
8 up.

9 MR. TYNAN: So if I understand the group
10 correctly, then we should add that bullet in as a
11 recommendation as from the entire committee?

12 Okay, Mr. Link, I'm going to ask you to
13 give me some language.

14 MR. LINK: You can't back me up on that?
15 We're asking are the changes that the Tech Service
16 Center could be provide that would improve their
17 effectiveness, I guess, right?

18 DR. ARRINGTON: Provide general expertise
19 areas of staff officers of the Tech Center as a public
20 listing.

21 MR. LINK: Would you say that again?

22 DR. ARRINGTON: Provide general expertise

1 areas of staff officers of the Tech Center as a public
2 listing or for the public.

3 MR. LINK: It works for me. So long as you
4 understand what it means. Provide, identify and what
5 you said was identify subject matter experts or
6 whatever within the Technical Service Center? I mean
7 same thing.

8 DR. ARRINGTON: I just said general.

9 MR. LINK: What did I say?

10 MR. TYNAN: Is that sort of the thinking
11 of the group, Mr. Link?

12 MR. LINK: Yes, I think so.

13 MR. TYNAN: Does that capture the idea?

14 DR. ARRINGTON: Well, something about I
15 think you wanted to publicly you want everybody to
16 have access to that. I thought you wanted that in
17 there.

18 MR. LINK: Well, it's one thing to
19 identify the areas of expertise, but it's another to
20 put names with that.

21 Identify staff members and their areas,
22 their specific areas of expertise?

1 DR. ARRINGTON: Yes, and they might be
2 pretty broad, but --

3 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: What if it was
4 something like provide a directory of staff names and
5 general areas of expertise. Some of them could just
6 be listed as generalists, and then some of them could
7 be generalists with specialties in poultry slaughter
8 and exports or something like that, so if it was just
9 like a directory.

10 DR. HARRIS: May I ask a question on this
11 topic?

12 MR. TYNAN: Certainly.

13 DR. HARRIS: Is there currently a staff
14 listing available period? If I wanted to just note
15 who the Tech Center staff is, is there a listing
16 available on the web?

17 DR. ARRINGTON: Not on the web. I know we
18 have it internally. I know we have it in a phone
19 book. It is in a FSIS phone book right now, a list of
20 all the staff officers at the Tech Center, and I guess
21 that's it. I guess the phone book is where we have
22 it.

1 DR. HARRIS: Obviously, then, I suppose
2 that would be a component of this bullet as well
3 because I've run into that before. If there is a
4 particular person that has helped me with a question
5 in the past or whatever, being able to look up that
6 person's contact information again.

7 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Actually it would be
8 nice to have a directory of FSIS employees and their
9 expertise in general. We can't find that on the web.
10 They only have key people, but you can't find staff
11 people, and you have to make five or six calls to
12 find someone.

13 DR. ARRINGTON: It is in that hard copy
14 phone book that came out.

15 DR. HARRIS: Which hard copy phone book?

16 DR. ARRINGTON: The very last one --

17 (Laughter)

18 DR. ARRINGTON: I think it was internal
19 one. Oh, I got it about two or three weeks ago,
20 because we were flipping through it and the last page
21 is a list of everybody.

22 MR. TYNAN: Okay, but I think the essence

1 of the question is not only having the names and the
2 phone numbers but knowing what particular area, do I
3 understand the issue correctly?

4 DR. ARRINGTON: I really liked how Dr.
5 Hollingsworth put it because then that captures -- it
6 keeps us with our flexibility yet at the same time
7 gives you an idea of who to be thinking about -- who
8 you want to talk to.

9 MR. LINK: So, does that work? I think
10 that captures what we're trying -- what I'm trying to
11 get to, I guess.

12 MR. ELFERING: Are you suggesting language
13 on the web?

14 DR. ARRINGTON: Is that any different
15 though from all the staff officers and FSIS than --

16 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Right. That's not
17 there on it. FSIS doesn't really have an employee
18 directory, not that I can find.

19 DR. ARRINGTON: So really on any staff,
20 you don't know who to call other than the director.

21 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I think that is a good
22 recommendation for all of FSIS.

1 MR. TYNAN: Dr. Harris, is this a
2 recapture of the --

3 DR. HARRIS: I think what he's tapped for
4 Bullet Point 6 I think captures what you guys were
5 asking for, do you agree with that? I think the
6 term, "making it publicly available" implies that it
7 would be pretty readily available to anyone using the
8 website.

 MR. TYNAN: Mr. Link, did you
9 have a follow-up question?

10 MR. LINK: Thank you.

11 MR. TYNAN: Mr. Elfering, I think you
12 were next?

13 MR. ELFERING: Yes, Kevin Elfering with
14 the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Getting back
15 to the numbers of staff officers - 20 to 25 people
16 that may answer these questions. Do you think there
17 should be something in there that really emphasizes
18 internal correlation so that the staff officers are
19 talking to each other so they know what answers
20 they're giving out to the plants also?

21 One of the things that we do in our
22 office, and you wouldn't have to do it this often, but

1 every morning we have a meeting, very strict rules,
2 number one, nobody can sit down, so we just give an
3 update of things that are occurring and especially
4 when a new directive comes out so that the same
5 answers are being given out to the industry, so you're
6 talking about all this correlation, but I think it's
7 really important that the people who are giving the
8 answers are correlating first.

9 DR. ARRINGTON: Do you want to answer
10 that?

11 DR. HARRIS: I wasn't going to answer it
12 as much as suggest maybe if the committee desired, we
13 could build that into Number 4 where we talk about
14 inspector's district offices include TSC staff
15 officers in that discussion of correlation activities
16 if that's what's desired.

17 DR. ARRINGTON: That's a good idea, but
18 yesterday when we had our discussion we did mention
19 every Wednesday we do correlate as a group, and every
20 day we do correlate when there -- particularly when
21 there is a hot issue, we do do that internal
22 correlation.

1 When I, as a supervisor, understand that there
2 is something has happened, maybe some shift in policy
3 or it may be an event has happened, then I will send
4 out either by e-mail or actually call the group
5 together and talk about that so that we are
6 correlated.

7 When we have a new initiative typically, we have
8 a small group of people that answer those calls, and
9 no one else does because they are the most up to date,
10 and then we spread that information -- correlate that
11 information internally to our other staff officers as
12 the time allows and depending on the issue that might
13 be within the day, within the week, within several
14 weeks, so we do do some of those activities they're
15 talking about saying correlated within ourselves.
16 Within the staff officers themselves, they also
17 correlate informally on what calls they're getting and
18 particularly if they get ones that sound like they
19 will need follow up or that it's contentious, say, or
20 something like that.

21 I'm not opposed to writing something about that
22 in there, but we do have - I just got the impression

1 you didn't know that we even did those activities, and
2 we did talk about that yesterday in our subcommittee
3 group.

4 MR. ELFERING: The only this is that --
5 the only question that I have is that with the numbers
6 of people, like you said, many of them are traveling,
7 that when they're coming back are they been updated or
8 it seems like you've got a system that -- and that's
9 kind of what I was thinking of.

10 DR. ARRINGTON: Yes.

11 MR. ELFERING: The numbers of people, if
12 you have five people that are there answering phone
13 calls what about the 20 that aren't there?

14 DR. ARRINGTON: Yes. On the internal
15 correlations, we do write down those notes, and
16 they're called internal correlation notes do not
17 distribute meaning that you don't take those notes and
18 fax them to the world, but meaning if you're at your
19 desk you would have a copy of those.

20 If you weren't here last week when we went over
21 it, you would read that. If you had questions, you
22 should be talking and asking I don't understand this

1 bullet, what does this mean? And so, yes, we do task
2 our staff officers with staying up to date with having
3 those correlation notes, with watching the web so that
4 when the new directives or notices come out, looking
5 at their e-mail, reading it, understanding it. If
6 they don't understand it, to ask questions.

7 Depending on the level of the question, it may
8 just be their neighbor that they ask to say that came
9 out, what does this mean? Or it may be, wow, this
10 really doesn't make sense to me. We need to discuss
11 this as a big group, and we might do that.

12 MR. ELFERING: Then it sounds like it's
13 already being done.

14 MR. TYNAN: So, you're covered? So no
15 change is required? Dr. Hollingsworth.

16 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Mine is sort of a
17 follow up on Kevin's point, and that is if -- I
18 haven't felt that there is a problem with internal
19 communications at the TSC as far as the internal
20 correlation. I have a greater concern about the
21 correlation of the Technical Service Center and
22 headquarters because I think in many situations

1 individual establishments call the Technical Service
2 Center. I think in Washington, trade associations
3 tend to call people in D.C., and I've done this
4 before. I've talked to somebody in Washington. I've
5 called the company back, and they say well we just
6 talked to the Technical Service Center, and that's not
7 quite how they explained it.

8 I worry more about that correlation and perhaps
9 even more so now. I see some real advantages with
10 moving the Technical Service Center to policy, but I
11 also worry about a bigger gap between correlation with
12 operations at headquarters and the TSC.

13 My only suggestion would be somehow that those
14 internal correlation notes need to be synchronized
15 with what field operations is doing and saying also,
16 and I don't know how that takes place now.

17 One way it maybe could be addressed, I noticed
18 here the idea of Q and A's which I think is an
19 excellent idea. Maybe the internal correlation notes
20 could be turned into monthly or quarterly or something
21 Q and A's that are available. I understand why your
22 internal notes have to be kept internal, but that

1 information, I think, needs to be turned into Q and
2 A's that the industry can have but also so that we
3 know field operations and the TSC have the same set of
4 Q and A's. Maybe that is happening, I've just run
5 into some cases where there -- even if it's not so
6 much that they're giving you different answers. It
7 takes them a few days to get correlated with what
8 Washington is saying and what TSC saying.

9 MR. TYNAN: Dr. Hollingsworth, did you
10 want to suggest some language?

11 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Well, the only thing
12 I'm wondering if under the develop and disseminate
13 additional Q and A documents on technical issues, if
14 we should just maybe expand that and say that should
15 be a routine thing or quarterly or monthly or an
16 established process maybe is what I'm looking for
17 here. An established process whereby Q and A's are
18 developed and disseminated or made available to the
19 industry at headquarters and at the TSC.

20 DR. ARRINGTON: You are tying in the
21 headquarters part. You're saying more specifically
22 Office of Field Operations, not the office of policy

1 headquarters.

2 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I thought that you
3 report to policy now that there is a communication
4 there and because you're separated now from
5 operations, I'm afraid they'll start dropping out of
6 that link.

7 MR. TYNAN: I'm sorry. Did you have some
8 language. I apologize. I was trying to find your --
9 Dr. Masters had to help me.

10 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Let's see, something
11 about -- I forgot what I said. Not routine.

12 DR. ARRINGTON: You did say routine. You
13 said quarterly based and you also said routinely,
14 right?

15 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Yes. Routinely or
16 something on a regular basis disseminate, Q and A's to
17 or provide the Q and A's to industry and FSIS
18 headquarters and the TSC so that everybody has the
19 same set of Q and A's.

20 MR. TYNAN: So You wanted to start off by
21 saying on a regular basis.

22 DR. HARRIS: Before we get too far, may I

1 make a suggestion?

2 DR. ARRINGTON: Yes.

3 DR. HARRIS: We didn't discuss this issue
4 last night. I'm glad that you raised it because I do
5 think it is a valid issue. I would really rather see
6 us put that in a separate bullet point and be very
7 explicit on what we mean.

8 DR. ARRINGTON: That's fine.

9 DR. HARRIS: And say that we would like to
10 see the Agency develop mechanisms for ensuring that
11 communication whether it be through Q and A's or other
12 things and maybe more specifically tell them, look, we
13 want you guys talking maybe more than just Q and A's
14 may not be the right answer. Maybe there's got to be
15 a different mechanism.

16 DR. ARRINGTON: And I'm hearing you say
17 your concern is that because we no longer an OFO that
18 there may be more of a gap there than we would have
19 with who are our supervisors.

20 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: It's a good point, and
21 I think Joe's right. Maybe the Q and A's is one thing
22 just to help share information, but what I am talking

1 about is more internal correlation between operations
2 and the Tech Center and the policy group. Good point.

3 DR. ARRINGTON: I think it's actually
4 communication and correlation. It's not just
5 correlation, and it's OFO Headquarters specifically.

6 MS. ESKIN: Did she say OFO Headquarters?

7 MS. MASTERS: And it's not even enhanced.
8 It's communication and correlation, regular, yes.
9 Communication and correlation between OFO
10 Headquarters.

11 MR. TYNAN: And the TSC.

12 MS. MASTERS: That's what you had, right?

13 MR. TYNAN: On everything? Okay. Are
14 there other comments or additions? The group, do we
15 have consensus the report we'll accept it as is? Do I
16 hear any dissenting opinions? There being none, we'll
17 consider that one done. Now I'm going to try and save
18 it.

19 DR. HARRIS: Mr. Tynan, can I assume that
20 you will add our names to the report or whatever is
21 appropriate to -- for formatting was since we --

22 MR. TYNAN: Well, should we just by

1 process of elimination as you suggested earlier?
2 Those that are on other groups or on yours? We're
3 covered. We'll do that.

4 DR. HARRIS: I assume you'll handle all
5 that formatting.

6 MR. TYNAN: Michael if you prefer. If
7 you'd like to sit there, I don't think it's necessary.

8 MR. GOVRO: Okay, Subcommittee Number 3
9 address the issue of training and outreach, and I'd
10 like to start by thanking the committee members, Dr.
11 Bayse, Darin Detwiler, Dr. Hollingsworth, and Mark
12 Schad, as well as our FSIS helpers, Robert Tynan and
13 Ellen Blumberg, who answered a lot of questions for us
14 and provided technical support.

15 We were given two questions, and on examination
16 we decided that these questions were similar enough to
17 each other that we would answer them as one.**

18 The two questions were are there other ways in
19 which FSIS can efficiently and effectively share
20 information through outreach and training with our
21 constituent groups and how can we improve our outreach
22 to external groups, establishments, states, and

1 constituents, and what additional training should we
2 offer or engage in with our constituents? They seem
3 fairly similar, so we went ahead and addressed them as
4 one.

5 The first thing we struggled with in our group
6 was definitions of the terms training, outreach, and
7 education, and we decided that for the purpose of this
8 discussion we would define those terms so that
9 everyone knew exactly what we were talking about. For
10 the purpose of this discussion we define training as
11 training that is given for FSIS employees and state
12 regulators. Outreach is something that the Agency
13 does to the regulated industry, and education is for
14 other groups such as underserved populations,
15 consumers, and the general public, possibly including
16 K-12 schools.

17 In response to these questions, we addressed
18 training and outreach components separate from the
19 education component. They seem to be dealing more
20 with the same issues. Training and outreach need to
21 be presented in a logical sequence. This statement
22 came from discussions that indicated that sometimes

1 there seemed to be a disconnect between the
2 information that was given to FSIS employees
3 concerning policies and directives and so forth and
4 the information as it was received by the regulated
5 industry, and we weren't quite sure if that was a
6 matter of receiving different information or hearing
7 it differently through different filters or what, but
8 we believe that it was important that that message be
9 consistent so that as much as possible everyone had a
10 similar understanding.

11 So, first FSIS employees need to be trained on
12 new rules and polices, and then the outreach issues to
13 -- as the joint training piece for FSIS and industry
14 and again FSIS needs to ensure that its employees, the
15 regulated industry, and states all receive the same
16 message.

17 The committee members made the assumption that
18 FSIS already has training programs in place for its
19 employees and state regulators based on the briefing
20 information that we were given prior to the meeting.
21 It appears that FSIS has done a lot to improve the
22 number of ways and the different ways that it delivers

1 that information to a geographically disbursed
2 workforce in industry.

3 At this point we sort of tossed out a bunch of
4 ideas. Some of it was just brainstorming and may not
5 suit what the Agency is able to do, but we thought we'd
6 go ahead and throw the ideas out there and let you
7 chew them over.

8 These ideas focus on outreach opportunities to
9 efficiently and effectively share that information.
10 First was the use of agriculture extension agents and
11 land grant universities for outreach. They can
12 provide facilities within a local area and technology
13 support such as web casts, satellite downlinks, and
14 simply facilities that you could gain access to.
15 Possibly explore the use of outside resources to
16 deliver training and outreach.

17 The next idea was, I think, fairly different
18 from what FSIS does now and that is to establish an
19 outreach team within FSIS to ensure that information
20 delivered in the industry training is the same as in
21 industry outreach. This team would ensure that
22 effective outreach occurs within designated regions,

1 and the concept we had in mind is that these people
2 would be assigned to particular regions to do their
3 jobs. The outreach team would be trained with FSIS
4 employees to ensure that they got the same message
5 that the employees were getting. Then they would take
6 that information out to the industry, and they could
7 do this in a variety of ways including arranging and
8 organizing, holding workshops, hold joint FSIS and
9 industry meetings at the local levels, take
10 information directly to the small and very small
11 plants, and this - we actually meant going to those
12 plants and delivering the information there. That
13 would allow them to have a discussion with the plant
14 personnel as well as the FSIS inspector for that plant
15 so that everybody ended up on the same page.
16 Assisting with the education component in the region,
17 communicating upcoming regional and national events to
18 industry. There was some discussion that the
19 industry, and I think we heard this yesterday, didn't
20 always know when FSIS was holding meetings or that
21 that they were welcome to attend. Participate in
22 workshops with associations and other existing

1 educational venues. Meetings like AFDO meetings,
2 affiliate of AFDO meetings where they could go and
3 deliver messages and also develop more of a
4 partnership relationship with industry.

5 We thought that one of the advantages of
6 delivering the message this way is that you could
7 allow a little more flexibility for those people to
8 work in an area and deal with the particular
9 challenges that they had in those areas such as what
10 types of industry are predominant in those areas, what
11 are the geographic challenges, what are the
12 educational challenges, the language challenges, a
13 number of things that different regions or areas of
14 the country might have different needs for delivery of
15 the outreach, and hopefully you could provide some
16 flexibility for those people to deliver that message.

17 The next thing was to tie training and outreach
18 topics to higher numbers of calls received by the
19 Technical Service Center, and I don't know to what
20 extent you do this, but we had a discussion about
21 assuming if you get seven or eight hundred calls to
22 the Technical Service Center a week that you should be

1 able to identify areas in which the calls were about
2 particular topics that would indicate that perhaps we
3 could do a better job of delivering the message in the
4 first place or doing clarification on a broader scale
5 rather than take those calls one at a time and just
6 make a tie-in between the people delivering the
7 training and the areas that you've identified where
8 understanding needs to be improved.

9 So, the Technical Service Center could identify
10 where those calls are coming from and the trends and
11 use that information to support the outreach.

12 Establish a self-study curriculum for plants to
13 offer basic information in hygiene, temperature
14 control, cross-contamination, and other GMPs. This
15 was an idea that Mr. Detwiler brought up being an
16 educator, and he pointed out that in the food service
17 industry in many places, food worker certification or
18 training, food handler cards, that sort of thing, is
19 required that calls for that person to have a basic
20 knowledge of the concepts of food safety. We threw
21 this idea out as something that would be done on a
22 voluntary basis. It would simply be some sort of

1 training module that you could give to the industry
2 that they could use perhaps as an incentive to their
3 employees to gain employment there or to keep
4 employment or for incentive raises, that sort of
5 thing. I'm sure that the industry could be very
6 creative with something like that. The idea, of
7 course, being that as I think Dr. Masters said
8 yesterday, the more people understand why they do
9 things, the easier it is to get them implemented.

10 The next topic was utilizing technology such as
11 e-learning, and that's a very broad term for all types
12 of technology, use of the internet, and computers.
13 Those options would include that we just had a general
14 agreement that the internet is a very cost-effective
15 way to deliver a message rather than printing and
16 shipping paper. Develop a list serve for sending
17 information such as directives, policies, and one-page
18 summaries and links to other information. One of the
19 ideas that was brought up is using -- e-mailing
20 PowerPoint slides and then holding conference calls so
21 that everybody has the PowerPoint presentation to
22 bring up and you simply talk through it one screen at

1 a time with someone who is directing the discussion.
2 Establish an FSIS extranet for industry to use to
3 provide interactive training modules, streaming audio,
4 video resources, and other electronic tools. I know
5 you mentioned that the briefing materials that you're
6 using interactive CDs and that sort of thing, and I
7 think there is probably no reason why that couldn't be
8 put up on some sort of internet-accessible format for
9 people to use.

10 Use cooperative agreements to extend and develop
11 e-learning with other agencies. Other groups that are
12 developing materials, private industry, again as we
13 mentioned universities, extensions, and so forth, and
14 then also to develop a reference center that would be
15 available online, and I'm sure some of that is
16 available already through the website, and I think
17 we're touching on a few ideas that the Technical
18 Service Center - I think really we're talking about
19 the same sorts of issues that is delivering
20 information to the industry.

21 Another idea was to offer regularly scheduled
22 conference calls or perhaps special calls when the

1 Agency needs to deliver new information. Compile a
2 database of how every plant wants to receive its
3 information that is query every plant on would you
4 like to receive it by e-mail, by fax, or by mail, and
5 that way you could very decisively get that
6 information to people in the way they wanted to
7 receive it.

8 Tailor the information to the target audience.
9 Different types of messages need to go to different
10 types of plants, different sizes of plants, different
11 parts of the country. We also had a bit of a
12 discussion on keeping information concise and brief
13 and how most people have a limit of we talked about 20
14 minutes or two or three pages and trying to very
15 concisely put the essence of your message into a short
16 concise document.

17 The next one calls for you to have a crystal
18 ball to predict questions that may arise from industry
19 and prepare question and answer documents, and there
20 was a consensus in the room that Q and A documents are
21 very good, particularly when they can focus on the
22 questions that people need answers to.

1 Just a general statement here next that many of
2 the above statements could also apply to the education
3 of consumers.

4 The last idea that we have on here we went back
5 to the subject of educating the public using the
6 public schools to raise the general understanding of
7 food safety concepts throughout the population as well
8 as in a more focused manner, particularly in areas
9 where meat/poultry industries are a big part of the
10 local economies, perhaps to outreach to the schools to
11 provide curriculums for them to use to create some
12 sort of a certification perhaps at the high school
13 level that could be used as an entry to a job in the
14 industry. It could also again be offered as a self-
15 study program to industry, and as we mentioned before,
16 a voluntary program could be used an incentive by
17 industry to its employees. Students could earn
18 certificates. School teachers could earn continuing
19 education credits, so we were looking for ways that
20 there would be some incentives for these to be picked
21 up and used. That's the end of our report. Comments.
22 Joe.

1 DR. HARRIS: Actually more than comments.
2 I've got a couple of questions, and they are probably
3 directed to Agency personnel that we have here. In
4 talking about making available information about
5 upcoming meetings, a quick question. Is the Agency
6 precluded from announcing meetings in a more informal
7 way before the Federal Register notices are actually
8 published? For example, obviously this Committee when
9 we meet a Federal Register notice goes out. Before I
10 was on the Committee, it was my observation that it
11 usually came out about 10 days before the meeting
12 which was fairly short notice for anyone that had
13 significant travel to get accomplished. Can the
14 Agency more informally announce those meetings even
15 though a Federal Register notice may still be coming
16 at some point in the future? I don't know your rules
17 on that. That may not even be something you can do,
18 but --

19 MS. MASTERS: This is Barb Masters. I'm
20 not aware that we are precluded from making that
21 announcement. I will verify that, but it's a good
22 point. Often times we are limited by which date we

1 can get it published in the Federal Register notice,
2 and you're right, we need to be very timely in our
3 announcement, so we'll check in to that and make sure
4 that we're doing that.

5 DR. HARRIS: I thought that I had even if
6 it were announced as tentative until such time as the
7 Federal Register came out. That was the first
8 question. The second question I had dealt with this
9 self-study thing. The only self-study guide that I
10 recall the Agency doing was when HACCP came out. Is
11 that still available publicly? I saw one that looked
12 a lot like that out on the table yesterday. It was in
13 Spanish, and my Spanish isn't really good enough for
14 me to deduce if that was the same document. I
15 remembered seeing the English version of it, but is
16 that still available?

17 DR. HARRIS: Is the self-study HACCP guide
18 still available?

19 MR. TYNAN: I do not know, but I will
20 check for you and will let you know. There. Other
21 comments or - oh, I'm sorry, Darin.

22 MR. DETWILER: At the beginning we

1 differentiate between the training and the outreach
2 and the education in terms of the audience, and I
3 recall from yesterday that there was some confusion
4 from time to time talking with the Technical Service
5 Center and talking with these outreach issues, and
6 we've been talking about the idea of how to work more
7 effectively and efficiently and communication. I
8 think that those three definitions might be considered
9 as suggestions in terms of maybe the Agency would
10 benefit from clearly identifying the audience in terms
11 of agency, industry, and consumer or general public
12 and different things. I have a technical service
13 center where I work, and it's the same exact name,
14 Technical Service Center.

15 It has nothing to do with food safety for the
16 industry that's regulated, but and obviously if I
17 worked in the industry and I knew that it was the
18 Technical Service Center, then that's a moot point.
19 When it comes to the consumer, the Agency, the
20 industry, if we identify clearly the audience that is
21 intended for the specific messages, and the specific
22 groups putting out those messages that might help to

1 better facilitate the organization and the
2 communication of that organization for people to
3 access whether that be on web page or even like we saw
4 with the diagram of where the different places are.
5 That idea, it doesn't have to be training, outreach,
6 education, but that idea of identifying the target
7 audience.

8 MS. MASTERS: This is Barb Masters, and I
9 do have one question for the group. You talked about
10 conference calls in a couple of different places, and
11 one place you talked about when the Agency needs to
12 deliver new information, did you guys talk at all in
13 your deliberations on conference calls, certainly it's
14 one way to reach out to folks. We've tried it a
15 couple of different times. As you well know, when you
16 try to get large groups on a conference call -- I
17 remember one call we had 150 folks on the call and we
18 had barking dogs and all kinds of folks. When you try
19 to get large numbers on conference calls, did you talk
20 what your audience -- who you were thinking of when
21 you looked at that audience when you talked about
22 conference calls, because clearly it's a way to reach

1 folks that don't have the updated high-speed lines,
2 etc., for web casting, but did you have groups in
3 mind? I mean, you said perhaps even PowerPoint slides
4 when you were looking at folks that had lower
5 technology, but did you talk in specifics who you were
6 thinking of when you were saying conference calls and
7 what type of audience you were thinking of?

8 MR. GOVRO: Yes, I think we had in mind
9 the industry, and I know that you're probably limited
10 like you said 150 - 175 people on a call which doesn't
11 nearly reach the industry, and that was one of the
12 ideas that was sort of tied to the use of the website
13 later with streaming audio where you could take the
14 call and then put it up on your website. But it was
15 just a - I think it was more to discuss the policy and
16 provide a Q and A session for industry. Jill.

17 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I think that in that
18 discussion or the fact of that very issue, Dr.
19 Masters, that you've mentioned was discussed as far as
20 the limitations of conference calls - the baby's
21 crying, the dog - and I think in our discussion what
22 we were really focusing on is the group that we're not

1 getting to now, so it was a small and very small
2 plans, the idea of the PowerPoint and conference call
3 was in lieu of those who don't have the technology or
4 wherewithal to do the web cast, so you'd almost down
5 the technology for some folks, so the idea was limited
6 groups who don't have other technologies or ways to
7 access them and also we talked about doing it in small
8 geographic areas so that you don't have the nationwide
9 conference call, but rather maybe within a state or a
10 district or something like that.

11 MS. MASTERS: Thank you, and then I heard
12 the suggestion that you do a voice stream as follow up
13 or even do a transcript of it as a way to even then
14 further multiply it. Was that discussed? Okay.

15 MR. GOVRO: Joe.

16 DR. HARRIS: One of the things I recall
17 back during the early part of this year when there was
18 a need to disseminate a lot of information quickly.
19 Back in the early days of January, the Department, not
20 necessarily FSIS but the Agriculture Department, I
21 thought very successfully did a lot of briefings by
22 both telephone and/or web cast simultaneously so you

1 could get on via telephone if that was better or via
2 the web, and as you said, then the audio was still
3 available on the website at a later time if you wanted
4 to log on late at night, when the internet wasn't
5 quite so busy and there weren't so many people using
6 up the bandwidth, so I think anything like that would
7 be very useful.

8 MR. GOVRO: And I do believe there is an
9 answer to the barking dogs and so forth, because when
10 FDA has its 50-state calls, everybody's on mute, and
11 the caller doesn't have to put themselves on mute,
12 they just -- they're out of it until they go to
13 question-taking. Kevin.

14 MR. ELFERING: Just one maybe a
15 suggestion. The USDA really puts out a lot of good
16 information, pamphlets and things like that, but a lot
17 of states do it too, and maybe you could even come up
18 with some type of a system where you'd be getting some
19 of the information that states put out so you're not
20 having to reinvent everything. One of the things that
21 our state does is it has a booklet that goes to all of
22 the elementary schools. It's called "Agriculture in

1 the Classroom", and a lot of it is related to
2 agriculture - agriculture issues - kind of teaching
3 young kids and especially city kids about agriculture,
4 but many of the editions have to do with food safety,
5 and what I'll do is I'll put a bunch of them together
6 and send them to Mary just so you can see what some of
7 the other agencies and groups are doing.

8 MR. GOVRO: Do we need to add anything to
9 the report to reflect that? Okay.

10 MR. ELFERING: I don't think so.

11 MS. MASTERS: This is Barb Masters, and
12 I'm going to clarify, Terry did let me know that we -
13 Joe, to answer your question we do through our
14 constituent alerts that we either fax out or e-mail
15 out, we do notify of upcoming meetings before the
16 press statements or before the register notice goes
17 out, so we are trying to do that, and we'll try to
18 even be better about that.

19 MR. GOVRO: I guess the next question then
20 is it sounds as though the group, if there are no
21 changes, accepts the report as it's written. I see no
22 dissenting voices, so I'll assume that that's a-okay,

1 so we have Number 2 and Number 3 down. What I would
2 suggest at this particular point to allow us to do a
3 little technological fixing, we'll take a break. It's
4 now according to my computer if you can trust it, it's
5 10:03, and maybe we could get back around 10:20
6 please.

7 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the
8 record at 10:04 a.m. and resumed at 10:29 a.m.)

9 MR. TYNAN: Getting older as I am, I've changed
10 the font so I can see it better, but actually it was
11 suggested to me that some of you in the back of the
12 room are also getting older and perhaps may need a
13 larger font. Thank you Chris for suggesting that. If
14 I can get all the black off here, I'll be all right -
15 there we go -- that didn't help, did it? We're going
16 to skip down to - all right. Let's go back to 12
17 point for a second. We'll fix it. How's that? Okay
18 we need to change the name? Okay.

19 DR. DENTON: We made light of that by
20 saying that we didn't like the topic, address another
21 one of our own choosing. Developing data repository
22 to help FSIS anticipate food-borne hazards. Okay.

1 Thank you, Robert.

2 We want to take this opportunity to thank our
3 committee for the work that they put in on this
4 particular set of questions that we were given. In
5 addressing the potential for developing a data
6 depository to help FSIS anticipate food-borne hazards.

7 I would also like to thank Renee who was the clerical
8 assistant in helping get this put together. Sean
9 Altekruse for his input in this particular process,
10 and I really want to thank Robert for taking the last-
11 minute edits that we incorporated in this particular
12 document.

13 The discussion was quite lively in our
14 subcommittee to say the least. We probably spent the
15 first half of our time period kind of working through
16 the issues surrounding something of this nature and
17 getting all of these things laid out on the table.
18 Once we got past that, I thought we really got down
19 into some of the more substantive issues that are
20 associated with this, and we will try to take these
21 questions one at a time and go through the process,
22 and then at the end we can go back and address any

1 concerns that our subcommittee has first, and then I
2 would really like to get input from the broader
3 committee at large.

4 To paraphrase the first question, how can FSIS
5 encourage processors of meat, poultry, and egg
6 products to contribute data into a data base that
7 would be useful for helping the Agency identify and
8 prioritize with regard to some of the issues that they
9 anticipate addressing in the future?

10 What we think here is that we need to clearly
11 identify the purpose for the data repository,
12 outlining the benefits to the Agency, to the
13 consumers, and participating industry and
14 academicians. Now you'll note that's a departure from
15 what the document is that's been printed out for you.

16 We also think it's very important to develop a
17 process for setting priorities for the data
18 utilization, perhaps even internal to the Agency in
19 developing those priorities, and then also provide
20 assurance that the identity for data contributors
21 remains anonymous via a third-party manager, that it
22 offers some protection with regard to those that may

1 contribute to the data depository.

2 The second question is actually two questions.
3 Would it help to develop a depository that enabled
4 information to be transmitted without identifiers; and
5 then Number 2, what incentives can FSIS use to
6 encourage participation in this depository project?
7 The short answer is yes, if it can be accomplished by
8 a third party managing the data such as a university
9 foundation and provide a totally anonymous data
10 submission process. We believe it's imperative to
11 maintain the integrity of the data by maintaining the
12 security system.

13 For industry, a potential benefit could be a tax
14 deduction for a charitable contribution to a
15 university foundation. One partial means of
16 supporting the data depository could be a user fee.
17 Contributors to the data depository should have access
18 to finished studies that are contained in the database
19 at no additional charge.

20 Question Number 3 is actually a three-part
21 question. What controls can be used to assure the
22 quality and reliability of the data? Should protocols

1 be required to define the sample design and who should
2 evaluate the data quality? In this one we think it's
3 important that we develop specifications for quality,
4 protocol, methodology, and documentation associated
5 with that data submission process.

6 We also believe that there should be implemented
7 a quality review panel to evaluate data submissions
8 with acceptance or rejection of the data. This panel
9 should have rotating members and probably also review
10 for acceptance or rejection the data access request
11 from parties that utilize the data that's contained in
12 the depository.

13 The Review Committee would be appointed by FSIS
14 and a third-party organization that is responsible for
15 managing the depository following a format used by NIH
16 or NRI in which you identify some of the key people
17 that would be the very best folks that you can have in
18 evaluating these data submission and data utilization
19 request.

20 FSIS could have expedited access to the
21 depository to address specified data needs. The
22 Agency would be expected to acknowledge the use of the

1 depository for that purpose. For other analyses, FSIS
2 would be expected to submit a proposal as outlined
3 above with any other user that wanted access to the
4 data.

5 With the committee - Question Number 4, finally,
6 is one question. Would the Committee recommend a
7 pilot project to develop a data depository for a
8 single pathogen associated with a product as an
9 initial activity? A pilot program should probably be
10 used to identify start-up issues for the data
11 depository. The pilot project should look at a stated
12 FSIS data need. It may be useful to begin by looking
13 at a relatively non-controversial issue such as
14 process control indicator organisms or comparisons of
15 sanitizers for equipment sanitation as a means to
16 prove the system and everything is in place to work as
17 it should be.

18 With that, I will ask our subcommittee if they
19 would to offer any additional comments with regard to
20 this because we really wrestled this thing all the way
21 around the room, and at times part of the way around
22 the world to get here. Any comments? With that, any

1 comments from members of the broader committee,
2 please.

3 MR. TYNAN: I think Dr. Hollingsworth.

4 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Was there any
5 discussion at all about ownership of the data or
6 funding for the data collection if you go to a third
7 party?

8 DR. DENTON: The ownership of the data
9 would be the foundation, and it would be something
10 that would be gifted to that foundation, and you had a
11 second part of that.

12 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: The funding.

13 DR. DENTON: We tried not to get too much
14 into the funding issue other than the fact that we
15 propose a user fee as a partial means to support that
16 data depository knowing that there are going to be
17 some issues with regard to how that's structured. We
18 haven't gotten that far. We are pretty much at a
19 conceptual level right now. I don't know that we
20 could even come up with a funding mechanism that would
21 completely address that.

22 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Okay.

1 MR. TYNAN: Mr. Detwiler, you had a
2 question or a comment?

3 MR. DETWILER: I guess if the purpose is
4 to collect this data in order to anticipate food-borne
5 hazards, I understand obviously from a litigious
6 purpose the idea of the anonymity of some of this
7 data, but to me hearing this and looking at this it
8 seems like there could be so much anonymity that we
9 know there's a problem out there, but we don't know
10 where or the idea of how can you connect cause and
11 effect in order to "anticipate" food-borne hazards if
12 there is such anonymity that there is just a bunch of
13 data, but you can't clearly analyze that data because
14 you don't know what region or what state or maybe
15 other factors, so I guess the comment is that I would
16 need to see more specification in terms of how vague
17 or what type of data. Otherwise, if it was just like
18 this, I don't see how we could use it to anticipate
19 food-borne hazards.

20 DR. DENTON: I'll try to respond to that
21 as best I can. The issue in this data repository is
22 not one in which it would result in regulatory action.

1 We're trying to get - gain access to all the
2 information that is out there with regard to cause and
3 effect. That's one of the reasons why we think that
4 the Agency needs to identify the priorities. It's
5 also one of the reasons why we think we need a review
6 panel that evaluates the quality of the data that goes
7 into this data set.

8 What the Agency's expectations are for this
9 information is to provide guidance with regard to
10 policy decisions in identifying areas that they may
11 not be aware are issues to be dealt with. It's an
12 anticipatory process more than it is a reactionary
13 process.

14 Now, by its nature, it means that some of the
15 data that we have collected is going to be historical,
16 obviously. That's the nature of data, but it may give
17 us some indication where we need to focus more
18 attention and better utilization of resources within
19 the Agency. The benefit to having this information
20 coming from all different industry sources and all
21 different academic sources is that we get the very
22 best information that we can. I don't know of any

1 place or any vehicle where we could gain access to
2 that volume of information that would allow us to then
3 determine that there is an issue that we may need to
4 address.

5 In defense of the folks that are contributing
6 the data, I think that concern about the regulatory
7 repercussion would preclude them providing that data
8 to that data repository if there were not some vehicle
9 that would protect them, the contributor of the data
10 from the anonymity standpoint.

11 MR. TYNAN: Mr. Schad, anything to add?

12 MR. SCHAD: On the how to encourage - on
13 the issue of how to encourage processors to submit
14 data. I've been thinking about this a lot ever since
15 I got the agenda, and of course one of the concerns is
16 the more I test, the more chance of me finding a
17 positive and all I can see is a downside of submitting
18 data to FSIS. I've been thinking how can we encourage
19 a processor to do this. What would be a benefit to
20 the processor to do this, and I guess this is a
21 question for the subcommittee, did they discuss this?

22

1 One thought I had was is another problem that a
2 small meat processor has is process verification
3 because of their limited resources in dealing with the
4 regulators. Proving to the regulators that they have
5 a safe process is a very difficult thing to do. Maybe
6 it is a safe process and the processor believes it is
7 a safe process, but yet it is incumbent on them to
8 have at least enough literature or enough testing done
9 to prove it is a safe process, and I was wondering did
10 the subcommittee do any type of discussion where in a
11 pilot project let's look at this process, get one or
12 more processors involved, studying a specific process
13 where the data used -- data can be used for the data
14 depository, but also the data could be proven or maybe
15 not proved that this process is a safe process. I'm
16 thinking that way this could be a two-way street. It
17 would be beneficial to the small processor, and the
18 small processor would be much more agreeable to giving
19 up the data.

20 DR. DENTON: We did talk about several
21 different ideas for a pilot project. Obviously, there
22 are some that could be selected that would benefit a

1 specific part of the industry. No objection to that.
2 We're trying to I think in the initial stages pick
3 one that's a little less controversial so that we can
4 prove our system works before we actually get into
5 something that is a little bit more I would say
6 difficult to manage, I think.

7 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: There was some
8 discussion of this issue in the case of small and very
9 small processors, and it was recognized that the
10 expense of testing and that sort of thing sometimes
11 makes it difficult for those companies to submit a
12 complete data set. One of the possible ways of
13 addressing that was for multiple small or very small
14 companies to work together to develop a data set, an
15 aggregate data set that might be useful for that
16 purpose.

17 That introduces a layer of complexity that
18 perhaps in just trying to develop a pilot project and
19 work through some of the start-up issues. Some of the
20 committee members thought it would be good to defer
21 from the initial pilot project but to try to work on
22 that very soon after.

1 DR. DENTON: Right. We'll see.

2 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: Because that is one of
3 the things, that one of the data needs is information
4 on how small and very small processors can meet FSIS
5 requirements.

6 MR. LINK: Just one comment. We
7 discussed at length how do you encourage somebody to
8 participate in this type of a project? It's hard to
9 find ways to convince people to do it because of
10 concerns over the anonymity of the data and things of
11 that source, so we were trying to find ways while one
12 way maybe there's a tax break, maybe there's access to
13 the data base so you finished studies. Things that
14 might encourage someone to participate, assuming that
15 everything is lined out and everybody understands the
16 rules and how we play. That's a tough question, so --

17 MS. MURANO: May I say something? This
18 will probably be a question best answered by members
19 of the panel who are industry representatives, but
20 maybe not. I agree completely with what Darin said in
21 the sense that to better use that data, it has to give
22 us a lot of information - as much as possible, and the

1 key to it is to have as complete a set of data as
2 possible. If you have, for example, only industries
3 in the Midwest providing data, for example, that's
4 only representative of that area, nobody else. Then
5 one cannot really make an assumption that that's true
6 for the whole country, so it's only as good as how
7 much data is submitted to the repository. So the
8 issue of the incentives for people to submit data is
9 huge as a result, because it all hinges on that. How
10 many people participate or how many entities submit
11 data, and the quality and completeness of that data,
12 so Charles, you're absolutely right that that's
13 really is the biggest issue as I've come to conclude
14 myself. My question to you all is, is it an incentive
15 to industry if you knew or thought that FSIS would be
16 making policy decisions or developing policy based on
17 that data? Therefore, the incentive being, boy, the
18 better, the more complete the data, the better the
19 decisions that FSIS will make. It behooves -- if I'm
20 an industry person, it behooves me to make sure that I
21 contribute data to that repository because otherwise
22 they might move on to do policies that are based on

1 not a complete picture. Is that enough of an
2 incentive, do - would you believe?

3 MR. LINK: I'll take a shot at it. I can
4 say that from past experience when the Agency has come
5 forth and said we're looking at this, we're developing
6 policy, we need data, the trade associations I think
7 have pulled the groups together and said we need data,
8 let's get it together so we can help guide and direct,
9 if you will, how the policy comes out. I think, yes,
10 to answer your question the essence is in it. Not
11 everyone participates even at that level. It's hard
12 to get folks to - it costs money, it takes time.
13 There are concerns about the data getting out. By and
14 large I think, yes, that's positive incentive. There
15 are trade association representatives here you
16 probably could speak to, but we would, how's that?
17 Sign here.

18 MR. TYNAN: Dr. Harris, do you have a
19 comment or a question?

20 DR. HARRIS: Maybe a little of both. I
21 guess my first question, my own lack of understanding
22 I guess, on the process of gifting data to a

1 foundation, and is that - I guess the implication in
2 what was written there was that the gifting of this
3 data is a tax benefit.

4 DR. DENTON: It could be.

5 DR. HARRIS: I guess I'm a little fuzzy on
6 it. I've never heard of giving data as a gift, and
7 better yet, how would I attach a value to it?

8 DR. DENTON: This gets a little easier
9 than I thought the question was going to be whenever
10 you ask it in that way. I know enough about two
11 separate foundations because of the institutions that
12 I've worked in. There have been donations to those
13 foundations of cash gifts. There have been property
14 gifts. There have been stock gifts. There have been
15 literary collections, and all of those sorts of things
16 that are gifted to the foundation. The value is set
17 by the donor because they are the ones that know best
18 what the value of that gift is. Now you realize that
19 I'm stepping off out into some legal issues, but in
20 talking to our attorneys that work with our
21 foundations, that vehicle for doing that is in place
22 already.

1 Now I'm not saying that a university foundation
2 is the only option. But it's the one that I'm most
3 familiar with because of the protection that they
4 afford a donor considered separate from the
5 university, and they obviously have got legal folks on
6 staff that can give these - give the guidance to the
7 donor about how to do it.

8 It's not that far out of the ordinary for that
9 sort of thing, because there are all kinds of
10 collections that are donated to these foundations.
11 Some of them have provisions that they immediately
12 turn around and sell them. Obviously this is not the
13 intent of this one. We want the data repository to be
14 held. Sean.

15 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: If you look at data as
16 the strings of zeros and ones, it might be hard to
17 think it had any monetary value, but when you start
18 thinking of it in terms of the human resources that
19 went into collecting it and the materials and the
20 methods and the time and everything else, it actually
21 -- and its value for answering questions -- it starts
22 to have considerable amount of value, so I don't think

1 that this would be a nominal gift in some instances.
2 It might be a fairly substantial incentive, but there
3 might be another incentive as well. That is that
4 companies that have found there is something they're
5 doing is working might want to make the rest of the
6 community aware of it. Because they've already
7 invested in establishing that whatever it is that's
8 working for them, and so that they have the benefit of
9 it already, and by making it available to their
10 competitors, they're making the general product that
11 they're involved in producing safer, and they're also
12 creating sort of an incentive for other people to
13 catch up with which means - so there's a competitive
14 advantage as well.

15 DR. HARRIS: My other question I think is
16 probably somewhat in line with what Dr. Murano was
17 asking a moment ago, and that gets into incentives for
18 participating, ensuring data quality, having -- and
19 Charles made reference to trade associations pulling
20 data together in the past and seeing firsthand how
21 difficult that can be even with - we would like to
22 think that we were extremely well trusted by our

1 members and how difficult it is to convince firms even
2 under those kinds of scenarios. I guess I tend to be
3 a little on the skeptical side just to be completely
4 honest. But did the subcommittee talk about - and you
5 talk about ensuring data quality. I could envision
6 situations where a company, even though they were
7 willing to submit data, may be most unwilling to
8 submit data that could in any way even anonymously
9 that could shed a negative light on either their
10 business or the industry as a whole. So, did you
11 discuss what kinds of mechanisms might could be put in
12 place to deal with that issue of - I think maybe an
13 analogy might be the old voluntary price reporting
14 that we had in livestock markets where the market
15 report was only as good as the data that went in, and
16 if companies withheld certain transactions, that could
17 shift the market up or down, and great effort and
18 great compliance effort had to be put in place to deal
19 with that. I see sort of a similar thing even though
20 my company's name may not be attached to data. If it
21 were data that made my industry come off in a bad
22 light, what would be especially my incentive for

1 submitting that type of data? I guess there probably
2 is no answer, and I really commend the subcommittee
3 for trying to get your arms around a very I think
4 difficult scenario, and I just wondered if you
5 addressed that in your deliberations, and what you
6 might - how to deal with that?

7 DR. DENTON: The short answer to that is
8 yes, we did. We talked about the value of positive
9 data that positions the industry via a number of
10 companies in a very positive light. We also talked
11 about the potential for having negative data that
12 comes in that does not necessarily position the
13 industry in a positive light. Don't know that we
14 resolved that, but we did talk about it. I think if
15 we look at it in the broadest sense that if we can
16 collect good data or data that positions us in a
17 negative light, and it's consistent across the entire
18 industry. Then that provides us an opportunity to
19 step forward and address a particular challenge in a
20 non-threatening way because if it's a problem for
21 everybody, then we want to get at the root cause of
22 what is leading to that problem, and that one is going

1 to be, I think, probably where the proof of the value
2 of the repository really is in addressing those
3 particular challenges that we know are still out
4 there.

5 MR. KOWALCYK: This Michael Kowalcyk. I'm
6 also on the subcommittee, and I'd like to follow up on
7 Dr. Denton's point that, yes, we are concerned with
8 some bias in the data because there is disincentive
9 for whoever is providing the data to provide data that
10 doesn't really show a good picture, and the problem is
11 is if this is to guide FSIS in policies and where
12 they're going to allocate their resources which I
13 commend them on taking that approach, that can cause
14 more harm than good. I think in that point we're
15 developing specifications for quality protocol
16 methodology is something that FSIS is really going to
17 have to look at very closely because you want the most
18 robust data possible that you can get, and it's not
19 just industry sources, but also from academia as well
20 as other research organizations. There should be
21 standards established that everybody knows that this
22 is the playing field we're working on.

1 I mean, that's a very sensitive issue, and you
2 could probably have a full day meeting just going over
3 that one question. We did discuss that and like James
4 said earlier, we wrestled that around the room pretty
5 good.

6 MR. TYNAN: Kevin.

7 MR. ELFERING: Let me just add a little
8 bit. I think that's one of the things - this was
9 discussed a lot - all of these different issues. One
10 of the things that you may think of too is that is
11 this going to develop some new directives or changes
12 in the CFR's based on some of the data they collect.
13 I think that's one of the things - with the first
14 thing that I think we talked about was is that FSIS
15 does have to really clearly define what they need this
16 data for and what they want it for. I think that's -
17 we try to talk about all these things, but without
18 having that clear definition, it's difficult to come
19 up with any recommendations.

20 MR. TYNAN: Dr. Bayse, you had a question
21 or a comment?

22 DR. BAYSE: A little bit different concern

1 about the data collection. Question 1 it's about Line
2 3, request of course is to contribute information in a
3 form that the Agency can use to conduct risk
4 assessments, so this might be a question for Dr.
5 Altekruise. Would that go into the FERN system
6 ultimately? How do you envision the data coming to
7 you and then where would it go in terms of your
8 existing systems?

9 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: I think that the group
10 mentioned that if FSIS is using data that it's - if
11 it's accessing the depository to address a specific
12 data need, that it's signaled in a report on a risk
13 assessment or in a proposed rule that it would have
14 access to it for that purpose, and it would
15 acknowledge that the source was the data repository.
16 If it's -- if there are people within an Agency who
17 think there might be an interesting research type - or
18 exploratory activity with the data, they would have to
19 go through the same process that any other potential
20 user would go through which is to submit a proposal
21 for review.

22 I don't actually think that's your question.

1 You're referring to, for example, using it for - we
2 talked about Homeland Security. Is your question
3 going in that direction at all?

4 DR. BAYSE: Well, no, but that's fine if
5 you want to go there.

6 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: There might be instances
7 where there would be some value in making the data
8 from the repository available for some other purposes.
9 We didn't really spend a lot of time on that issue,
10 but Homeland Security was an area where we thought
11 perhaps data from the repository might be made
12 available for that type of purpose.

13 DR. BAYSE: Well, another concern I had
14 which is perhaps not worth mentioning, but I noticed
15 in the legislative update for 2005, that there is a
16 request for expansion of FERN and also for an
17 expansion of the eLEXNET, and so I was just wondering
18 since we have these budgetary concerns, perhaps you
19 got time to work all these things out, but that if you
20 were dependent on expansion of some of those systems,
21 that that would be something else to worry about.

22 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: I have to defer to

1 others in the Agency on that. I apologize. It's not
2 my area.

3 DR.BAYSE: I just wanted to say that as
4 far as eLEXNET, that we have requested more funding
5 for those initiatives are very much, as the priority
6 is food security. It's a way to have a good working
7 network with our sister agencies like FDA and EPA and
8 some others so that we can share data and
9 methodologies and so forth with an eye more towards
10 Homeland Security eyes what those initiatives are for
11 even though not only -- let me say that certainly
12 obviously how biased the data that is submitted to
13 this repository is is a very key issue. Michael is
14 absolutely right, and that's why multiple sources have
15 to be inputted into that repository, not only industry
16 data, obviously still our own FSIS's regulatory data,
17 baseline study data.

18 If we're successful in getting Congress to
19 repeatedly giving us funding for us to conduct
20 baseline studies within the Federal government,
21 academia, and so forth so that hopefully if you have a
22 lot of various sources of data, you may maybe

1 recognize what the outliers are, as we can do with
2 statistics and figure out whether are some -- whether
3 there are significant differences based on who is
4 giving you the data. That would be certainly
5 something to make sure that we look into so that we
6 develop a certain amount of confidence in the data
7 that we get.

8 MR. TYNAN: Mr. Schad, you had a comment
9 or a question?.

10 MR. SCHAD: Well, I put my card up to
11 respond to Dr. Murano's initial question, and it was -
12 -

13 MR. TYNAN: I'm sorry to be so long
14 getting back to you then.

15 MR. SCHAD: I think we pretty well touched
16 on it. I'm going to speak from the small industry
17 perspective on that, and we've talked about data
18 quality and proper statistical analysis. I think it
19 pretty much answered my question and my concern there,
20 but from a small industry perspective, their concern
21 is going to be now are the big plants going to flood
22 with so much data that they are going to skew that

1 data so it's not really representative of the smaller
2 industry or my small industry process. I think we're
3 dealing with a perception issue there. So many times
4 perception is reality. We have to acknowledge that,
5 and so I just wanted to voice that concern here.

6 MR. TYNAN: Dr. Hollingsworth.

7 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I also wanted to go
8 back to Dr. Murano's question in that I was sitting
9 here thinking of some worst case and best case
10 scenarios. I think getting information in this
11 depository from academia, state labs, and things could
12 work - could work quite well. I think if what you're
13 looking for is industry data, though, actually in some
14 ways saying that the incentive is that if we have data
15 we'll make better policy. That may actually backfire,
16 and I was trying to think of an example in my head,
17 and the one I came up with is if the Agency said
18 they're looking at a policy on Listeria in floor
19 drains, and you said we need data on that. If I'm a
20 plant and I've tested my floor drains ten times and
21 never found Listeria, I'd be happy to send you that.

22 If I tested my floor drains and found that seven

1 out of ten times, I'm not going to send you that. Not
2 if I think you're going to make policy based on that,
3 so saying that it's for policy, I think is going to
4 have even a greater impact on skewing the data,
5 because the industry is going to think well I don't
6 want to send data that's going to create or lead to
7 policies that I can't live with.

8 On the other hand I was trying to think of an
9 example when we've asked for data and it's worked
10 well, and I have one example if you'll bear with me.
11 It was actually an FDA example, but we had a problem
12 at retail with labeling a particular product in the
13 wording and the terminology that was being used, so we
14 went out to the industry and said, tell us how you're
15 labeling this product, and we will get back with you
16 on information of alternatives to label it and things
17 that you shouldn't label it because it's against the
18 regulation. We got tons of samples of labels. We
19 took them to FDA and said here's what the industry is
20 using, and they said all of these are okay. These two
21 are actually against the regulation. They have to
22 stop that, and there were a few that we presented to

1 them that they said, wow, this is - we've never seen
2 this. It's a good idea. Tell them it's okay.

3 We were able to go back to the industry and say
4 here's all the labels you can use and here are the
5 ones you can't. Everybody was so happy, and we had a
6 huge amount of response, so I think if the approach at
7 least initially, and I think that's what this
8 committee touched on, is a pilot.

9 If you can put in the context of this
10 information is going to help the industry to either be
11 sure they're complying with current regs or help
12 assure that there is clarification on ways things are
13 being done, then you'll get information from them.
14 But I think if it's strictly we're going to make
15 policy based on this data, you're either going to get
16 none or very skewed data. Just my thoughts.

17 CAPT. ALTEKRUSE: If I could on that,
18 there was something I mentioned yesterday was
19 anecdotes, and we have access to in-plant records
20 right now, so we really just don't feel that that type
21 of data is necessarily informative for making policy.

22 First of all, it's difficult to tabulate across

1 all companies and that sort of thing. Then I compared
2 anecdotes with well-designed studies, so if there was
3 a nationally representative survey of plant floor
4 drains and a large number of plants were sampled, not
5 necessarily all - not a census of every plant, but a
6 randomized national survey that was representative,
7 that would be much more useful and, in fact, it would
8 be more likely in the review process to be considered
9 worth submitting to the depository - the repository -
10 than one company's ten most recent test results. So
11 that's sort of the objective is to have really well
12 designed data that addresses FSIS data needs.

13 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: The only thing I
14 would say there then if that's the case, then that
15 seems to be somewhat different than what we were
16 originally presented, because now you're talking about
17 collecting data and keeping it anonymous, and I think
18 that would be much easier to do.

19 If you wanted to do, for example, a study or a
20 survey and the goal is we want to collect this
21 information and house it in some place where it can be
22 analyzed and cleaned up so that it's not linked back

1 to any facility, I think that's quite different than
2 what I thought this question was asking. If it's
3 going out collecting data and keeping it anonymous,
4 that's quite different, I think. What I understood
5 this to be was voluntary submission of data into a
6 repository of some sort, so I think there may be
7 different issues, one much easier than the other
8 actually.

9 DR. DENTON: We talked about that just a
10 bit too because you're absolutely right. There is
11 some data that exists in which it would be presented.

12 We'd pick up to date and move forward, we're talking
13 about new data collection and the way that you design
14 that is going to be much different, much more
15 palatable to all concerned because you can remove
16 identity as part of the design of the project.

17 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: That's very different.

18 DR. DENTON: We really - apples and
19 oranges on the sources of the data.

20 MR. TYNAN: Mr. Detwiler, I saw you
21 reaching for your card, is that - do you have a
22 comment or a question?

1 MR. DETWILER: Darin Detwiler. I guess
2 also with the anonymity, and if was a survey or in the
3 original idea, there are companies with locations in
4 many different states, and so if one company was to
5 submit their data and keeping their anonymity, I could
6 see that it would be hard to determine what state or
7 region this was in, so maybe, I don't know if this was
8 discussed, but instead of maybe one university, and
9 like everyone's sends it to the one university, maybe
10 it's sent to a state or a regional collection place
11 and then to the university so that at least we would
12 know that these were within this region, and they are
13 still anonymous, but we know they were within this
14 region before it was sent to the university, so there
15 that much way of saying this is in the northwest or
16 this is in the southwest or something like that.

17 MR. TYNAN: Did you want to comment on
18 that, Dr. Denton?

19 DR. DENTON: I think that's a valid point.
20 In thinking about university foundation, those of us
21 who have talked about this informally are not really
22 sure that any one of us want it. Being perfectly

1 honest. But if you put together a group that could do
2 that, it makes a lot more sense and it becomes less
3 onerous on any particular institution. I think
4 Darin's point is well taken about at least knowing
5 more about the region of the country that the data
6 comes from.

7 Now I haven't thought that all the way through
8 yet on what the ramifications of that would be. It's
9 going to be pretty difficult in some of the
10 commodities because we know that they're really
11 concentrated in certain areas of the country.

12 MR. TYNAN: Dr. Harris, I think we're
13 going to give you the last word.

14 DR. HARRIS: Actually I put card up before
15 Jill made her last comment because mine was going to
16 be very similar, but maybe I can just phrase what I
17 passed a note to Dr. Denton a moment ago. What we
18 really need is a success story to use as an example,
19 and we're lacking that I'm afraid. The FDA example
20 you gave I think was a good one, and I think it's
21 probably unfortunate that in the absence of a success
22 story we're going to get the other kind of story based

1 on some past experiences and perhaps the pilot project
2 on a very non-controversial issue is absolutely the
3 way to go.

4 We need an example of having broad participation
5 in something like this that actually has what is
6 perceived by everybody involved as a good outcome.
7 Most people's recollections has been participation in
8 something like this as having a negative policy
9 outcome. That I think is the key is where we've got
10 to find a success story to use as our example of why
11 this needs to happen.

12 DR. DENTON: Charles, did you have
13 something else?

14 MR. LINK: I always have to have the last
15 word.

16 (Laughter)

17 DR. DENTON: I think about we'll give you
18 the last word.

19 MR. LINK: I was thinking that was a
20 pretty good way to finish -

21 DR. DENTON: Next to the last word.

22 MR. LINK: The only comment I was going to

1 make was back to Darin's comment on the regional issue
2 and I think a lot of that it comes all back to
3 defining what it is you're trying to capture. Why
4 you're looking for, if regional difference make a
5 difference, then yes, we ought to do that. Otherwise,
6 why not just be anonymous, but it really gets down to
7 really defining what it is you want to capture, what
8 the rules are going to be, how are you going to get
9 people to participate, so anyway and we need a success
10 story.

11 DR. DENTON: Thank you, folks.

12 MR. TYNAN: Any other last words? We made
13 no changes on the report other than the ones that Dr.
14 Denton and I worked some magic on it before we
15 started. Are there other comments or changes that
16 need to be made at this point?

17 MR. MURANO: I guess before we close I
18 just wanted to thank all of you for tackling this.
19 This is not an easy thing, obviously. As I always
20 like to say, anything that's easy to do would have
21 been done already, right? This is a tough thing, but
22 I think we all see the potential value to this. If

1 it's done right, if it's all of those things that
2 you've discussed, so I certainly thank you for
3 pursuing that, and I know that FSIS will continue to
4 think about how to do this and don't be surprised if
5 you see this issue come up again or in some other way.

6 I ask your continued advice on it, and certainly,
7 when you leave this meeting, I would venture to invite
8 you - I'll say this on behalf of Dr. Masters. I think
9 she will agree that any afterthoughts, any other
10 input, would be very much appreciated, because this is
11 an important issue. I truly, truly believe that if we
12 all, in a perfect world, could put all of the
13 information together in one place and we could all
14 avail ourselves of it, we could do some great
15 proactive preventive things to improve public health.

16 I really believe that, so it's just a matter of
17 putting our heads together and coming up with a way to
18 do it. I completely agree that a good pilot project
19 that's a success story that shows people the value,
20 but the great potential for good for everyone is
21 important, so thank you all very much.

22 MR. TYNAN: You're welcomed. Dr.

1 Hollingsworth.

2 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Jill Hollingsworth,
3 Key Marketing Institute. In follow up to what Dr.
4 Murano just said, but I was going to throw it out as a
5 suggestion to the subcommittee whether or not on this
6 particular issue we should actually add some type of a
7 statement that the committee feels like this issue is
8 so preliminary in presenting it to us and in our
9 discussions that perhaps the committee would actually
10 suggest that this issue be brought back to them for
11 further discussion when there -- when it is further
12 developed and there is more information and it's been
13 thought through more that the committee actually
14 requested this issue remain as an ongoing issue at
15 least for awhile.

16 DR. DENTON: I agree to that. Everybody else
17 okay with that?

18 MR. TYNAN: Is that to be an understood or
19 would like that in the subcommittee report?

20 DR. DENTON: I think we need to put that
21 one in the report.

22 MR. TYNAN: Okay, would you suggest where

1 you'd like that to be located?

2 DR. DENTON: At the bottom.

3 MR. TYNAN: That makes it easier for me,
4 thank you.

5 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Maybe just with an
6 asterisk and a note, special note or something.

7 DR. DENTON: Bold, italics.

8 MR. TYNAN: I won't guarantee I can find
9 it on this computer the way things have been going
10 this morning. We'll do a word check here in a little
11 while. Is that about right, Jill?

12 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I'm sorry, and you
13 think I can read that? -ot, what's a -ot.

14 MR. TYNAN: I have all my technical
15 support.

16 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Oday -- ot that the
17 committee --

18 MR. TYNAN: I'm under pressure now,
19 everybody's watching. Okay. How does that sound?
20 Okay. I'm sorry I apologize. Any other changes or
21 recommendations from the committee to --

22 DR. HOLLINGSWORTH: It just needs a little

1 cleaning up there.

2 MR. TYNAN: It's getting away from me.
3 Okay. Is that - perfect. All right, any other
4 changes or suggestions for the report? There being
5 none, I assume the committee is okay with this report
6 as written? Perfect. Okay. So we have three
7 reports. I promise we'll do a little editing when we
8 get back to the office. Rather than take the time now
9 to try and get copies and everything for you, what
10 we'll do is I'll e-mail out the final versions. I
11 think we did that the last meeting, and if everybody's
12 agreeable we'll do it that way again.

13 We're at the point in the agenda where we have
14 our public comment, our wrap up, and our adjournment.

15 We're going to go maybe to the public comments. I
16 did not notice anyone had signed up outside for
17 comment, but I will allow the group if there is
18 someone that wants to make a comment to come to the
19 microphone, and if you would identify yourself and
20 your organization for us please, I would appreciate
21 it, and we have about a three-minute to four-minute
22 limitation.

1 MS. RAZER: Is it on?

2 MR. TYNAN: I hope so.

3 MS. RAZER: Hi. I'm Ann Razer, with the
4 North American Meat Processors Association and I just
5 wanted to comment on --

6 MR. TYNAN: It's not on, excuse me, miss,
7 I'm sorry.

8 MS. RAZER: Okay, how's that.

9 MR. TYNAN: Perfect.

10 MS. RAZER: Ann Razer with the North
11 American Meat Processors Association. I just wanted
12 to comment real quickly on the Technical Service
13 Center report. I think you guys did a great job and
14 identified a lot of great things as far as correlation
15 goes and especially with the list of names and
16 especially areas that would be of great to me and to
17 most of my members. Even if you can't get the
18 specialty areas in there, just having the list of
19 names available would be a great help.

20 I did want to add one more thing and a problem
21 that we see, and I know I've talked to some of you
22 about this before, is that there still is a little bit

1 of resentment, I guess, in the field. I don't know if
2 resentment is the right word, from some of the
3 inspectors that are in the plants that maybe don't
4 have the respect for the Technical Service Center that
5 maybe they could, and I know a lot of them do, but I
6 just wanted to add in there that whatever the Agency
7 can do to pump those people up as the experts and as a
8 great place for plants and for their inspectors to go
9 to find a solution together. Anything that you can do
10 in that area is always appreciated, and that has
11 improved greatly probably within the past couple of
12 years, and I think that's about it. Thanks.

13 MR. TYNAN: Thank you. Do we have anybody
14 else that has comments they'd like to make? Okay, I'm
15 going to get to the point on the agenda where we have
16 wrap up, and I'm going to allow Dr. - oh, I'm sorry.

17 DR. HARRIS: Actually I had one.
18 Yesterday we heard opening remarks from Dr. Murano,
19 and she had expressed to us how much she's enjoyed
20 working with this committee, and I think that as a
21 committee we probably failed to acknowledge how much
22 we've appreciated her leadership over the last several

1 years, and knowing that this is the last time we will
2 get together with Dr. Murano as the Undersecretary for
3 Food Safety. I know at least from my perspective I
4 want to express my appreciation to the leadership that
5 she's provided. I think great progress has been made
6 and much more to go, and I wish her well in her new
7 endeavors.

8 (Applause)

9 MR. TYNAN: Notice I've been replaced - I
10 got fired at the computer.

11 MS. MASTERS: Just doing a quick demo here
12 for my closing remarks. I'm going to showcase - some
13 of us are heading off when we leave here to our
14 supervisory conference. We've tried to make sure we
15 have representation from each of our program areas
16 because these meetings are so important to us to hear
17 from you all on our recommendations. We have been
18 able to have each program office here this week with
19 the exception of our Office of Field Operations, and
20 they have been in Pittsburgh doing a National
21 Supervisory Conference with the hope of making sure we
22 have consistency with our Office of Field Operations,

1 and I will be heading there this afternoon myself, and
2 one thing we're going to be doing is unveiling some
3 posters. One of my issues that I've been trying to
4 work on is communications, and I've charged our OFEO
5 office to put together a communications task force.
6 I've actually been able to be in front of - we've
7 estimated about 5,000 of our work force of about
8 10,000 folks, and communications is really important
9 to me and getting our public health message across to
10 our folks, and so I put together these posters that
11 we're going to get out and helping our own workforce
12 understand that they rely on the regs and that should
13 be what they turn to when they make inspection
14 decisions and that they are working through the regs
15 and that their public health is their mission, and so
16 we wanted to share these with you all. This is
17 something we're going to be putting out there. We
18 thought they were kind of fun, so I wanted to share
19 them with you now before we closed to today, and we'll
20 quickly go through them. I think we're going quickly
21 through them.

22 That's a third generation FSIS inspector. Thank

1 you very much. Anyway. So just something that we're
2 doing to try to get the message out there that we
3 should be professional, that we should use our thought
4 process, use the inspections acts, the regs, and that
5 we are public health professionals.

6 So, again I want to thank all of you. As Dr.
7 Murano said, these issues are never easy, certainly.
8 It sounds like the data group had the most fun of all,
9 sorry I missed that. Why we even sent them to the
10 most fun place, right? The lounge - inside joke for
11 those of you that weren't here yesterday when they got
12 their assignments.

13 But again, in addition to your reports, I have
14 scribbly notes all over my documents. I guess I get a
15 lot of insight from the comments that you make as you
16 go through your reports because we get so much insight
17 from your information that you share with us, and this
18 is always a useful process for me, and I really do
19 appreciate the input that you give to us and
20 appreciate the commitment that you make to come out
21 here, and I really, really do appreciate everything
22 that you bring to this committee.

1 In particular I want to thank that folks that
2 are leaving the committee, and I don't get to
3 appreciate Ms. Baldwin and Dr. Jan, and Dr. Johnson,
4 because they're not here, but I want to thank Ms.
5 Eskin personally and all the commitment that you've
6 given to this committee, and we appreciate all the
7 work that you've done, and we're sorry that we are not
8 going to be able to say that you have to come back in
9 front of the data integration, but perhaps you'll be
10 able to come back and be part of the public or if you
11 have additional thoughts. I know the subcommittee
12 would be appreciative of any thoughts since you've
13 been part of that original committee that you always
14 have that opportunity through public comment to also
15 share with us, so please remember that you have that
16 opportunity in other ways to share with this group.

17 So again, I think we've gotten just a wealth of
18 information and gotten a lot of ideas and whenever I
19 leave these meetings my mind's always going, and I've
20 already got ideas that I want to follow through on, so
21 we'll be prepared to report back to you. I hope that
22 you have again seen the changes in the format to this

1 meeting, and again I want to thank Robert and his
2 staff for the good work that they've done to get the
3 information to you and to make sure that we can have a
4 fruitful meeting instead of scrambling around to get
5 the information to you at the last minute that we are
6 able to use the meetings in a productive format
7 because I think, as you can see, the output that we
8 get from you is substantive when we get the
9 information to you ahead of time, and so thank you,
10 Robert, for your commitment to this group.

11 Thanks to all of you for the hard work that you
12 did, and again I'll look forward to having our groups
13 mull through the information yet again, and again I
14 can already tell that we have a lot of good
15 recommendations that we can put to good use, so thank
16 you very much for your commitment and dedication that
17 you bring to this group. Thank you very much and have
18 safe travels home and a Happy Thanksgiving next week.

19 Thank you very much.

20 (Applause)

21 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter was
22 concluded at 11:31 a.m.)