

LM WORKING GROUP

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February 7, 2001

Docket Clerk

Docket No. 99N-1168

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

5630 Fishers Lane

Room 1061

Rockville, MD 20852

00-048N

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LM working group

RE: Draft Assessment of the Relative Risk to Public Health from Foodborne Listeria monocytogenes Among Selected Categories of Ready-to-Eat Foods (FDA Docket No. 99N-1168). Request to Extend Comment Period,

The Listeria monocytogenes (LM) Working Group is a coalition of trade associations and companies representing the food industry, including the 20 food categories referred to in the *L. monocytogenes* risk assessment. Since 1994, the LM Working Group has advocated, in cooperation with the federal government, processes of responsible and appropriate policy development related to the control of Lm in food and in at-risk populations.

The recently released Listeria Risk Assessment will have a major impact on all segments of the food industry including processors, retailers and food service providers, as well as the public. A considerable amount of time will be needed to review, analyze and constructively respond to the comprehensive January 18, 2001 *Federal Register* notice.

Unfortunately, a 60-day comment period does not permit time for the food industry to respond in a substantive manner. The massive amount of material in the risk assessment necessitates an extension of the comment period. The LM Working Group is confident the agency aspires to produce a document that will be most useful to the agency and food industry. The LM Working Group, therefore, requests FDA to extend the comment period on the *Draft Assessment of the Relative Risk to Public Health from Foodborne Listeria monocytogenes Among Selected Categories of Ready-to-Eat Foods (FDA Docket No. 99N-1168)* for 120 days until July 18, 2001,

The LM Working Group looks forward to working with the agency on this issue.

Sincerely,

American **Frozen** Food Institute
American Meat **Institute**
Food Marketing **Institute**
International **Dairy** Foods Association
National Chicken Council.
National Milk Producers Federation
National Fisheries Institute
National Turkey **Federation**