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Paula Horlen

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE  
SECRETARY USDA

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The Honorable Ann Veneman

USDA

14th St + Independence Ave SW

Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Veneman:

I realize there is a hold on all new regulations, but I wanted you to be alert to one called "Performance Standards for the Production of Processed Meat and Poultry Products."

This was developed in response to a Listeria outbreak that killed 21 people and sickened 100 people. The proposed regulation would require processors to test their plants and their products for safety.

The easy, ready-to-eat foods are popular with children, but unfortunately among the people most susceptible to the sickness (as well as pregnant women, the elderly, and people whose immune system is compromised).

I realize alternate regulations could also be effective. I am not aware if the manufacturers / processors are currently liabl. for all hospitalization/doctor's fees related to their contaminated product but they should be. And a stiff fine would also spur them into preventative measures.

Use your own judgement, but please do what you can to avert a replay of a Listeria outbreak.

Best wishes,  
Paul Holder

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