

FROM THE **editor-in-**
Chief

Behind *be FoodSafe*: Clarity at the Core

The editorial philosophy of *be FoodSafe: The FSIS Magazine* is to present compelling information in an accessible and understandable way with insight and perspective that will benefit readers from both the public and private sectors. Contemporary design and compelling graphics will also help tell the story that is the complex world of food safety.

Our goal is to eliminate what I have frequently titled the “dead language of government,” or the regulatory rhetoric that can be mind numbing and uninspiring to the majority of our readers. There is no reason why government publications — at any level — have to be inscrutable, dense, and hard to understand. *be FoodSafe* strives to provide a mechanism — both in print and online at befoodsafe.gov — to painlessly access important information as well as learn the rationale and reason behind developing topics.


Our first issue (Fall 2006) celebrated the Centennial of the 1906 Meat Inspection Act, which provided the essential foundation for USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service to protect the food supply today. We also highlighted the important mission being carried out every day by FSIS’ workforce of approximately 10,000 Americans from all over the country: protecting public health.

This issue and those going forward will cover food safety at all levels — from the farm and the butcher shop down the road, to the complexities of international trade standards. Our coverage is designed to translate complicated issues into plain and useful information.

For instance, we devote our cover story to how the public health community — as well as average citizens — can better serve the growing “at-risk” population, or those who are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses than otherwise healthy adults.

The surprising fact about those considered “at risk” is that as many as one in five Americans falls into the category. And those who don’t, at the moment, may sometime also face a similar challenge to their health and well-being. Ensuring that food handlers take the necessary safety and sanitary precautions at all levels of the production, processing and distribution system will save lives. And that responsibility also extends to the home, where so much of the care giving for “at-risk” individuals takes place. Sometimes care giving can be rote, or an afterthought, and we now know that kind of approach can have tragic consequences. So, it’s time to recognize how sometimes the seemingly inconsequential to some can be vital for others.

Another goal of *be FoodSafe* is inclusiveness. We want to offer as many voices as possible; particularly those that contribute to a better understanding of the challenges we face today. Please feel free to contact us directly at beFoodSafeMagazine@fsis.usda.gov.

There will never be a final word when it comes to food safety. However, there will be many critical moments, and it is our hope that *be FoodSafe* will provide clarity to subjects that may be confounding at present, as well as context and relevance that advance public health in a significant way. 



By Daniel P. Puzo