

Question:

The Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency have worked jointly to develop a revised consumer advisory for methyl mercury in fish and shellfish. The revised advisory has been written to take into account the recommendations made by the Food Advisory Committee in July 2002. The revised advisory is targeted toward pregnant women, women who may become pregnant, nursing mothers and young children. The revised advisory is a joint FDA/EPA document that addresses both commercial and locally caught fish.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide a report of how FDA has responded to the FAC recommendations in developing a revised joint advisory with EPA that addresses both commercial and locally caught fish. Given the enormous interest and expectations from all perspectives on this issue, the one important point we believe all agree on, is that we move forward and begin our education program. We agree that as we learn more from scientific findings, population demographics, NHANES and receive results from the education effort on consumer behavior, we may need to refine the approach. We believe that this activity is best conducted concurrently with an outreach and educational program that in the interests of public health should commence as soon as possible. We therefore seek the Committee's concurrence.