



Dear School Food Service Director:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are joining together with the restaurant and foodservice industry to invite you to participate in celebrating September as National Food Safety Education Month<sup>SM</sup> (NFSEM). The goal of NFSEM is to educate the public about safe food preparation. This *Consumer Education Planning Guide* is designed to assist you in promoting food safety education this September 1999.

NFSEM was created by the International Food Safety Council, a coalition of restaurant and foodservice professionals certified in food safety. Now in its 5th year, it is a major food safety education focus for government and consumer organizations, as well as industry. President Clinton's National Food Safety Initiative recognizes and encourages observance of NFSEM.

*Cook It Safely* is this year's theme for NFSEM. Cooking food to temperatures that will destroy bacteria is a significant factor in foodborne disease prevention. The use of food thermometers, particularly for meat and poultry, as well as egg casseroles and other combination dishes, is recommended to ensure that food has been cooked safely. Eggs and seafood also must be cooked thoroughly, as described elsewhere in this *Guide*, to be safe. Research shows that undercooking food is a contributing factor in many foodborne disease outbreaks.

This *Planning Guide* contains a variety of ideas and tools for organizing food safety education activities and events for various age groups. A "How To" section offers suggestions for putting them into practice.

We hope you will consider NFSEM an excellent opportunity to focus your efforts on educating consumers about the critical role they play in food safety. We thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Levitt, Director  
Center for Food Safety and  
Applied Nutrition, FDA

Thomas J. Billy, Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service