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**Consumer Protection - Food Safety
July 4 Radio Address**

**THE CLINTON/GORE ADMINISTRATION:
INCREASING FOOD SAFETY FOR
AMERICA'S FAMILIES**

July 2, 1998

"I challenge Congress to fully fund our Food Safety Initiative and give Americans peace of mind when they reach for a piece of food. I call on Congress to pass legislation that will allow the federal government to recall contaminated meat and poultry. The present system of recalls was created in an age when meat traveled around the corner. Today, it travels around the country. We need new authority to seize meat that may be contaminated, to protect America's families."

Vice President Al Gore
July 2, 1998

Today, Vice President Al Gore is joined by Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and calls on Congress to fully fund the Administration's Food Safety Initiative and pass legislation giving the USDA authority to order the recall of contaminated meat and poultry and to impose civil penalties for violations of food safety standards.

ADDRESSING THE DANGER OF FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS. Every year, an estimated 6.5 to 33 million people become sick from food-borne illnesses. The medical costs and productivity losses associated with these illnesses range from \$6-\$34 billion a year. After making revolutionary changes in our meat, poultry, and seafood food safety systems, the Clinton Administration dramatically expanded its food safety efforts last year by launching the Food Safety Initiative, a comprehensive strategy to improve food safety from the farm to the table.

A CALL FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION. The President has requested additional funding in fiscal year 1999 for resources to continue the fight for improved food safety. The House approved less than one-fifth of the Administration's request, and the Senate Appropriations Committee provides even less funding for this important initiative to protect American families. Today, the Vice President challenges Congress to fully fund the Food Safety Initiative, which would:

- **Further expand our early warning system** and strengthen state surveillance activities of food-borne illness;
- **Hire FDA inspectors** to improve the safety of our nation's fruit and vegetables, both domestic and imported;
- **Develop new ways** for federal inspectors to detect food-borne illnesses in meat and poultry and determine the sources of contamination;
- **Improve education outreach** on proper food handling.

ENCOURAGING STATES TO ADOPT THE FDA'S MODEL FOOD CODE. The Vice President encourages state and local governments, and the retail food industry to adopt and follow the food safety recommendations in the FDA's Food Code, which includes recommended, but voluntary, standards and practices to keep food safe in restaurants, grocery stores, nursing homes, day care centers, and other local food service operations. By adopting this Code, our citizens would be ensured of uniformly effective safety protection throughout the nation.

CHALLENGING CONGRESS TO PASS THE FOOD SAFETY ENFORCEMENT ACT. The Vice President challenges Congress to pass legislation sponsored by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) that will give the Department of Agriculture the authority to assess civil fines and order mandatory recalls of unsafe meat and poultry products. Currently, the USDA can only respond to food safety violations by bringing criminal actions or withdrawing inspections, recalls are voluntary and civil penalties are unavailable.

Food safety - Radio address
July 4 ✓

Jordan Tamagni

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**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
RADIO ADDRESS ON FOOD SAFETY
JULY 4, 1998**

Good morning. I have just returned from my trip to China, a great and ancient nation that is undergoing historic change. I saw evidence of that change in the faces of people free for the first time to work in jobs of their own choosing ... in the new private businesses that are helping China's economy to grow ... and in the first free elections of local leaders in Chinese villages. I was able to speak directly, not only to the Chinese government, but to the Chinese people, about the importance of freedom and what it means to us in America.

Seeing once again the power of these ideals makes me even prouder to be home in time for Independence Day, when we celebrate the freedom our founders fought for more than 220 years ago.

The Fourth of July is also a time for families and friends to come together, at backyard barbecues and public parks all across America. Today, I want to talk to you about what I am doing to make sure that the food and drinks we serve to our families this Independence Day and every day are safe.

America's food supply is the most bountiful -- and the safest -- in the world. For nearly six years, I have worked hard to make food safety a top priority. I signed into law legislation to keep harmful pesticides off our fruits and vegetables. We put in place strong protections to ensure that seafood is safe, and we are modernizing our meat and poultry safety system. Last year, we launched a nationwide early warning system to catch outbreaks of food-borne illness sooner, and prevent them from happening in the first place.

But as much as we have done, we know we must do more to keep our families safe and strong. We know that older people and children are especially vulnerable to contaminated

food.

That lesson was driven home tragically last year, when apple juice contaminated with a deadly strain of E. coli bacteria caused the death of a 16-month-old child in Washington State, and led to the hospitalization of more than a dozen children.

Today, we are taking two important steps to ensure that our food supply is as safe as we can make it. First, I am pleased to announce a new rule that requires warning labels on all packaged juice that has not been pasteurized or processed to kill harmful bacteria. These warnings will help families make better decisions about the juice they buy -- and they will help us to prevent thousands of Americans from becoming ill every year.

Second, I am directing the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture to report back to me within 90 days with a plan to create a new national institute for food safety research. This institute will join the resources of the public and private sector, and bring together the talents of the most esteemed scientists in the government, universities, and business to develop cutting edge techniques to keep our food safe.

I am doing what I can to protect our families from contaminated food. But Congress must do its part to ensure the safety of America's food supply. First and most important, it should fully fund my \$101 Million food safety initiative. Among other important programs, this initiative will pay for 225 new FDA inspectors and employees, to keep unsafe food away from our borders, out of our stores, and off of our dining room tables. Congress should also give the FDA greater authority to halt imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that are produced under safety conditions that do not match our own strict standards. It should give the USDA new authority to impose tough fines on food producers who violate those standards -- and to issue mandatory recalls of unsafe meat and poultry before it reaches our tables. And it should confirm a respected, experienced scientist, Dr. Jane Henney, to lead our food safety efforts as commissioner of the FDA.

Food can never be made entirely safe, and every parent has a responsibility to handle food carefully -- especially during the summer. But we must do everything we can to protect the food Americans eat and to give families the peace of mind they deserve. That's one way to keep our nation strong as we move into the 21st Century.

Happy 4th of July, and thanks for listening.

Message Sent To: _____

THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES JOINT INSTITUTE FOR FOOD SAFETY RESEARCH AND LABELING OF FRESH JUICES

July 4, 1998

In his weekly radio address, the President will announce the publication of a final rule to improve the safety of fruit and vegetable juices. The new regulation, which will take effect in time for this year's apple cider season, will help prevent illnesses from fresh, unpasteurized juices by requiring labels on these products. In addition, the President will announce a plan to create a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will develop a coordinated strategy for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative. Finally, the President will call on Congress to provide full funding for his Food Safety Initiative, pass vital food safety legislation, and confirm Dr. Jane E. Henney as the new FDA commissioner.

Warning Labels for Consumers. The President will announce a final rule that will require warning labels on juice products that have not been processed to reduce microbial risk. These labels will state: "WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and, therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems." These labels will be required for all packages of untreated, fresh juices but not for juice sold for on-site consumption, such as in restaurants. The rule will be effective for this year's apple cider season. The FDA expects it to reduce significantly the incidence of juice-related illness, now estimated at up to 40,000 cases each year, including both treated and untreated juice.

Food Safety Research Institute. The President will direct the Secretaries of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to report back to him within 90 days on the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will: (1) develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative; and (2) efficiently coordinate all Federal food safety research, including research conducted with the private sector and academia. The principal goals of this Joint Institute will be to develop the means to identify foodborne hazards more rapidly and accurately, and to develop effective interventions to prevent food contamination at each step from farm to table.

Food Safety Initiative and Legislation. The President also will call on Congress to provide full funding for his \$101 million food safety initiative, which would support a variety of measures including: hiring additional FDA inspectors to examine the safety of our nation's fruits and vegetables, both domestic and imported; developing new ways for federal inspectors to detect food-borne illnesses in meat and poultry and determine the source of contamination; improving educational outreach on proper food handling; and expanding our early warning system to help detect and respond to outbreaks of foodborne illnesses. The President also will call on Congress to pass two vital pieces of legislation to improve the safety of the nation's food supply. One bill will ensure that the FDA halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products. The second bill will give USDA the authority to issue mandatory recalls and impose civil penalties for unsafe meat and poultry.

New FDA Commissioner. The President also called on Congress to confirm Dr. Jane E. Henney as the new Commissioner of the FDA. The FDA needs the strong leadership of Dr. Henney to help lead the way to improving food safety and assuring the safety and efficacy of pharmaceutical and biological therapeutics, medical devices, blood products, generic drugs, food additives, and cosmetics.

Clinton Administration Accomplishments In Improving Food Safety

The President's announcement builds on a strong record of food safety initiatives, ensuring that Americans eat the safest possible food. The Administration has put into place improved safety standards for meat, poultry, and seafood products, and has begun the process of developing enhanced standards for fruit and vegetable juices. The Administration also has expanded research, education, and surveillance activities throughout the food safety system.

*February 1998. Administration announces its proposed food safety budget, which requests an approximate \$101 million increase for food safety initiatives.

*May 1997. Administration announces comprehensive new initiative to improve the safety of nation's food supply --"Food Safety from Farm to Table" -- detailing a \$43 million food safety program, including measures to improve surveillance, outbreak response, education, and research.

*January 1997. President announces new Early-Warning System to gather critical scientific data to help stop foodborne disease outbreaks quickly and to improve prevention systems.

*August 1996. President signs Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996. The law requires drinking water systems to protect against dangerous contaminants like cryptosporidium, and gives people the right to know about contaminants in their tap water.

*August 1996. President signs Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, which streamlines regulation of pesticides by FDA and EPA and puts important new public-health protections in place, especially for children.

*July 1996. President Clinton announces new regulations that modernize the nation's meat and poultry inspection system for the first time in 90 years. New standards help prevent E.coli bacteria contamination in meat.

*December 1995. Administration issues new rules to ensure seafood safety, utilizing HACCP regulatory programs to require food industries to design and implement preventive measures and increase the industries' responsibility for and control of their safety assurance actions.

*1994. CDC embarks on strategic program to detect, prevent, and control emerging infectious disease threats, some of which are food borne, making significant progress toward this goal in each successive year.

*1993. Vice-President's National Performance Review issues report recommending government and industry move toward a system of preventive controls.

**THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES NEW FOOD SAFETY
RULE REQUIRING LABELING FOR FRESH, UNTREATED JUICES**

July 4, 1998

In his weekly radio address, the President will announce the publication of a final rule to improve the safety of fruit and vegetable juices. The new regulation, which will take effect in time for this year's apple cider season, will help prevent illnesses from fresh, unpasteurized juices by requiring labels to alert those most vulnerable to food-borne illness, such as children and the elderly, of the risk associated with these products. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) estimates that there are up to 40,000 cases of juice-related illness (including both treated and untreated juice) each year, and that this rule, especially when combined with another proposed food safety rule, will significantly reduce that number.

Providing Warning Labels for Consumers. The FDA rule will require any packaged untreated juice to be labeled with a warning statement advising consumers of the potential risks of juice that has not been processed to eliminate dangerous bacteria. This requirement will apply to all processors that package untreated juice for consumption off-site, including retail processors such as grocery stores that squeeze and bottle juice for home use. Retail sellers of juice for consumption on-site -- such as restaurants and juice bars -- will be exempt from this labeling requirement.

As a result of this new rule, consumers will see the following label on juice products that have not undergone pasteurization or a comparable treatment: "WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and, therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems."

Labeling Rule Works Together With HACCP Rule. The labeling rule will work in tandem with another proposed rule that will require that all fruit and vegetable juice processors implement a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system for their products to protect the public from health hazards. The proposed HACCP regulation will ensure that processors take the steps necessary to reduce the number of microorganisms in their products to an amount roughly equivalent to that achieved by pasteurization. Retailers of packaged juice, as well as processors who sell less than 40,000 gallons of fresh juice per year, will be exempt from this requirement. FDA is in the process of seeking comments on this proposal.

Safety of Juices. About 98 percent of all juice sold in the United States is pasteurized, and juice products generally are safe and nutritious. During the past few years, however, several serious outbreaks of foodborne illness have resulted from the consumption of juices that have not been pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy pathogens. As a result of the two rules described above, FDA estimates that up to 40 million additional gallons of juice will be pasteurized, and the incidence of illness significantly reduced.

**THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES FOOD SAFETY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

July 4, 1998

In his weekly radio address, the President will announce a plan to create a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will develop a coordinated strategy for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative.

Joint Institute for Food Safety Research. The President will direct the Secretaries of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) to report back to him within 90 days on the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will: (1) develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative; and (2) efficiently coordinate all Federal food safety research, including research conducted with the private sector and academia.

Goals of the Institute. The two principal goals of the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research will be to develop the means to identify foodborne hazards more rapidly and accurately, and to develop effective interventions to prevent food contamination at each step from farm to table.

In addition to improving coordination among the Federal agencies, the Institute will serve as a focal point for coordinating research with states, the private sector, and academia, by means of public-private research partnerships, or other appropriate mechanisms. The specific structure and operations of the Institute will be outlined in the agencies' report back to the President, and will be based on extensive consultations with all interested parties, including consumers, farmers, industry, and academia.

Current Status. At present there are at least 12 agencies that conduct food safety research. Under the President's food safety initiative, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has established an interagency food safety research working group to help coordinate Federal research priorities and planning. While this interagency process is improving our coordination, a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research will provide an even stronger and better focused research strategy for food safety.

**THE PRESIDENT CALLS FOR FULL FUNDING FOR FOOD
SAFETY INITIATIVE AND PASSAGE
OF VITAL FOOD SAFETY LEGISLATION**

July 4, 1998

In his weekly radio address, the President will call for full funding of the food safety initiative in his FY99 budget and for passage of two vital pieces of legislation to improve the safety of this nation's food supply into the 21st Century.

Food Safety Initiative. The President's FY99 budget includes a request for \$101 million to improve the safety of the nation's food supply. These resources will support a variety of measures including: hiring additional FDA inspectors to examine the safety of our nation's fruits and vegetables, both domestic and imported; developing new ways for federal inspectors to detect food-borne illnesses in meat and poultry and determine the source of contamination; improving educational outreach on proper food handling; and expanding our early warning system to help detect and respond to outbreaks of foodborne illnesses.

Congress has so far failed to provide the resources this important initiative requires. The House-passed Agriculture Appropriations bill provided only \$16.8 million of the Administration's requested increase for USDA and FDA, while the Senate Committee-passed bill provided only \$2.6 million. The President will call on Congress to meet his budget request for these measures, which are critical to the safety of the food consumed by America's families.

Enhanced FDA Oversight for Imported Foods. The President will call on Congress to pass food safety legislation, introduced by Senators Milkulski and Kennedy and Reps. Eshoo and Pallone, that gives the FDA greater authority over imported foods. This legislation will ensure that the FDA halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products. The legislation also enables the FDA to halt imports from a country or facility that refuses to allow FDA inspections. This legislation gives FDA authority that is comparable to USDA's existing authority to prevent the importation of unsafe meat and poultry.

Mandatory Recall and Civil Penalties for Unsafe Meat and Poultry. The President also will call on Congress to pass the Food Safety Enforcement Enhancement Act, sponsored by Senators Harkin, Daschle, Johnson, and Leahy, which gives USDA the ability to assess civil fines and to order mandatory recalls of unsafe meat and poultry products. Currently, the USDA can respond to food safety violations only by bringing criminal actions or withdrawing inspections; all recalls are done on a voluntary basis and no civil penalties are available. This new legislation will give USDA additional enforcement tools to prevent consumers from ingesting and becoming ill from dangerous meat and poultry.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

SUBJECT: JOINT INSTITUTE FOR FOOD SAFETY RESEARCH

Americans enjoy the most bountiful and safe food supply in the world. My Administration has made substantial improvements in food safety, from modernizing meat, seafood, and poultry inspections to creating a high-tech early warning system to detect and control outbreaks of foodborne illness.

Our success has been built on two guiding principles: (1) engaging all concerned parties, including consumers, farmers, industry, and academia, in an open and far-ranging dialogue about improving food safety; and (2) grounding our efforts in the best science available. We have made good progress, but more can be done to prevent the many foodborne illnesses that still occur in our country.

As we look to the future of food safety, science and technology will play an increasingly central role. An expanded food safety research agenda is essential to continued improvements in the safety of America's food. We need new tools to detect more quickly dangerous pathogens, like E. coli O157:H7 and campylobacter, and we need better interventions that reduce the risk of contamination during food production.

Food safety research is a critical piece of my Fiscal Year 1999 food safety initiative; and I have urged Congress to revise the appropriations bills it currently is considering to provide full funding for this initiative. I also have urged Congress to pass two critical pieces of legislation to bring our food safety system into the 21st century: (1) legislation ensuring that the FDA halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that come from countries that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or come from countries that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products; and (2) legislation giving USDA the authority to impose civil penalties for violations of meat and poultry regulations and to issue mandatory recalls to remove unsafe meat and poultry from the marketplace.

At the same time, we need to make every effort to maximize our current resources and authorities. One very important way to achieve this objective is to improve and coordinate research activities across the federal government and with state and local governments and the private sector. Solid research can and will help us to identify foodborne hazards more rapidly and accurately, and to develop more effective intervention mechanisms to prevent food contamination.

I accordingly direct you to report back to me within 90 days on the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will: (1) develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with my Food Safety Initiative; and (2) efficiently coordinate all Federal food safety research, including research conducted with the private sector and academia. This Institute, which will operate under your joint leadership, should cooperate and

consult with all interested parties, including other federal agencies and offices -- particularly, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy -- state and local agencies focusing on research and public health, and consumers, producers, industry, and academia. The Institute should make special efforts to build on efforts of the private sector, through the use of public-private partnerships or other appropriate mechanisms.

These steps, taken together and in coordination with our pending legislation, will ensure to the fullest extent possible the safety of food for all of America's families. I appreciate your commitment to improving food safety, and I look forward to your continuing leadership in developing this Joint Institute for Food Safety Research.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON FOOD SAFETY RADIO ADDRESS

July 4, 1998

Q: What did the President say in his radio address?

A: In his radio address, the President: (1) announced the publication of a final Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rule to improve the safety of fruit and vegetable juices; (2) announced a plan to create a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will develop a coordinated strategy for conducting food safety research activities; and (3) called on Congress to provide full funding for his Food Safety Initiative, pass vital food safety legislation, and confirm Dr. Jane E. Henney as the new FDA Commissioner.

FDA Juice Rule

Q: What is the FDA juice labeling rule?

A: The FDA rule will require any packaged untreated juice to be labeled with a warning statement advising consumers of the potential risks of juice that has not been processed to eliminate dangerous bacteria. This requirement will apply to all processors that package untreated juice, including retailers such as grocery stores that squeeze and bottle juice. But retail sellers of juice for consumption on-site -- such as restaurants and juice bars -- will be exempt from this labeling requirement.

As a result of this new rule, consumers will see the following label on juice products that have not undergone pasteurization or a comparable treatment: "WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and, therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems."

Q: How much juice is expected to be pasteurized as a result of the proposed rules?

A: Currently, about 98 percent of all juice sold in the United States is pasteurized. However, it is expected that up to 40 million additional gallons of juice will be pasteurized as the result of these proposed rules. As a result, FDA expects that these proposals will reduce the number of illnesses significantly.

Q: When will this rule become effective? How will these regulations affect this juice season?

A: The labeling rule, announced by the President in his Fourth of July radio address, will be in place by September of this year, in time for the 1998 cider season. The effective date is extended for juices other than apple cider until November to allow these products additional time to comply. Because of the short effective date, FDA is allowing flexibility in how the warning statement appears. While FDA intends to require that the

warning statement appear on the label of the product itself, there is a phase-in period of one year during which the statement can appear on placards, signs, or other point-of-purchase materials so long as such labeling is prominent enough to effectively inform consumers.

Q: Are juices safe?

A: Juice products, in general, are safe and nutritious foods. Currently, about 98 percent of juice sold in the United States is pasteurized. However, the growing number of consumer illnesses in recent years demonstrates that a problem exists with respect to unpasteurized products. During the past several years, outbreaks of foodborne illness have been associated with the consumption of juice and beverages containing juice that have not been pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy pathogens.

Food Safety Research Institute

Q: What did the President announce with respect to a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research?

A: In his weekly radio address, the President announced a plan to create a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will develop a coordinated strategy for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative. The President directed the Secretaries of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) to report back to him within 90 days on the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will: (1) develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative; and (2) efficiently coordinate all Federal food safety research, including with the private sector and academia.

The two principal goals of the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research will be to develop the means to identify foodborne hazards more rapidly and accurately, and to develop effective interventions to prevent food contamination at each step from farm to table.

In addition to improving coordination among the Federal agencies, the Institute will serve as a focal point for coordinating research with states, the private sector, and academia, by means of public-private research partnerships, or other appropriate mechanisms. The specific structure and operations of the Institute will be outlined in the agencies' report back to the President, and will be based on extensive consultations with all interested parties, including consumers, farmers, industry, and academia.

Q: Why is food safety research important?

A: Food safety research is critically needed to develop the means to identify foodborne hazards more rapidly and accurately, to provide information and tools for regulatory programs and enforcement, and to develop effective interventions that can be used as appropriate to prevent food contamination at each step from farm to table. New pathogens emerge or grow more resistant, and we need the best science available to better improve food safety.

Q: **Why do you need a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research?**

A: At present there are at least 12 agencies that conduct food safety research. A Joint Institute for Food Safety Research will coordinate federal research priorities and planning and develop a stronger and better focused research strategy for food safety.

Q: **Isn't there already a group that coordinates food safety research? If not, why isn't there?**

A: Under the President's food safety initiative, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy has established an interagency food safety research working group to help coordinate Federal research priorities and planning. The Institute will build on the work that group has done, and provide a better and more structured approach to coordinating food safety research and developing a single research strategy.

Food Safety Budget

Q: **What did the President ask for in the FY 1999 Budget request with respect to food safety?**

A: The FY 1999 Budget included a \$101 million (or 12 percent) increase over the FY 1998 level for the Administration's inter-agency food safety initiative. Of this total amount, \$25 million would finance FDA's improved capability to ensure the safety of imported foods. Another \$24 million of the Initiative would go towards: developing a rapid test for the detection of pathogens; improving slaughter and processing systems to avoid contamination of food products; and establishing a baseline of data to better assess the risk of contamination in the US food supply. In addition, \$7.8 million would be used to expand consumer education initiatives, especially for high risk populations (the elderly and children).

Q: **What is the status of the Food Safety Initiative in the FY 1999 Appropriation bills?**

A: The Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee-passed bill would provide \$2.6 million of the \$95.6 million requested increase: no additional funding for FDA and \$2.6 million for USDA. The House-passed Agriculture Appropriations bill would provide

\$16.8 million of the requested increase: \$7 million for FDA import inspections and \$9.8 million for USDA activities.

Q: Hasn't Congressional action on the appropriations bills effectively killed the President's food safety initiative?

A: We hope not. The full Senate is expected to vote on its appropriations bill next week, and we will urge it to provide full funding for the food safety initiative. We are working with the Congress to explore alternate means of financing the initiative, including potential user fee options within FDA and USDA. And if Congress rejects all of these approaches and refuses to fund our food safety initiative, we think the American public will hold it to account.

Q: Is all of the \$101 million that the President asked for necessary for food safety?

A: Without additional funding for the Food Safety Initiative, the Administration will not be able to fully develop appropriate responses, prevention, and control strategies for reducing the level of food-borne illness in the United States.

In addition to the funding requested to strengthen FDA's import inspection and expand USDA's and FDA's research and education activities, funding is requested to continue to improve FDA's food safety infrastructure, as started in the FY 1998 Food Safety Initiative. Also, significant resources are targeted to strengthening both USDA's and FDA's risk assessment capabilities. Risk assessment is important in helping to identify foods and processes that are most likely to lead to food-borne illness. Finally, funding is requested to expand the USDA's and HHS's ability identify and track food-borne illnesses.

Legislative Proposals

Q: What did the President say in his radio address about the FDA import legislation?

A: The President called on Congress to pass food safety legislation, introduced by Senators Milkulski and Kennedy and Reps. Eshoo and Pallone, that gives the FDA greater authority over imported foods. This legislation will ensure that the FDA halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or that came from countries that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products. The legislation also enables the FDA to halt imports from a country or facility that refuses to allow FDA inspections. This legislation gives FDA authority that is similar to USDA's existing authority to prevent the importation of unsafe meat and poultry.

Q: What did the President say in his radio address about the USDA mandatory

recall/civil penalties legislation?

A: The President called on Congress to pass the Food Safety Enforcement Enhancement Act, sponsored by Senators Harkin, Daschle, Johnson, and Leahy, which gives USDA the ability to assess civil fines and to order mandatory recalls of unsafe meat and poultry products. Currently, the USDA can respond to food safety violations only by bringing criminal actions or withdrawing inspections; all recalls are done on a voluntary basis and no civil penalties are available. This new legislation will give USDA additional enforcement tools to prevent consumers from ingesting and becoming ill from dangerous meat and poultry.

Q: **Aren't these legislative proposals essentially dead? Has Congress moved on them at all?**

A: These proposals are not dead. The Administration is working with members to try to get these vital pieces of legislation passed and expects the Congressional sponsors of these measures to raise the bills on the House and Senate floors.