FSMA Facts

FDA FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

Snapshot of Food Safety Milestones in the History of the FDA

Until a little over a century ago, there were no federal laws or regulations in place to protect the public from potentially dangerous substances in medicines or foods.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln appointed a chief chemist to serve in the new Department of Agriculture. This appointment marked the beginning of the Bureau of Chemistry, the predecessor of the Food and Drug Administration.

1880
Peter Collier, chief chemist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, recommended the passage of a national food and drug law, following his own food adulteration investigations. The bill was defeated, but during the next 25 years more than 100 food and drug bills were introduced in Congress.

1883
Harvey W. Wiley became chief chemist, Prompted by increasing concerns, both by scientists and consumers over the use of untested chemicals as food preservatives, Dr. Wiley set out to investigate whether such preservatives should be used in food, and at what levels they were safe. With funding from Congress in 1902, he expanded the Bureau's food adulteration studies, and advocated for a federal law to protect and inform consumers.

1906
Pure Food and Drugs Act is passed by Congress, prohibiting interstate commerce of misbranded and adulterated foods, drinks, and drugs. This law was spurred by shocking disclosures of the use of poisonous preservatives and dyes in foods, documented in the press and featured in Upton Sinclair's novel The Jungle.

1907
First Certified Color Regulations issued at the request of manufacturers and consumers, listing seven colors found suitable for use in foods.

1927
The Bureau of Chemistry becomes two separate entities: Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration (regulatory) and Bureau of Chemistry and Soils (research). In 1930, the regulatory agency's name is shortened to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under an agricultural appropriations act.

1938
Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic (FDC) Act passed by Congress (replaced 1906 Act).

1939
First Food Standards issued for canned tomatoes, tomato puree, and tomato paste.

1949
For the first time, FDA publishes guidance for industry, "Procedures for the Appraisal of the Toxicity of Chemicals in Food" (which came to be known as the "black book").

1952
FDA consumer consultants appointed in each field district.

1954
First large-scale radiology examination of food by FDA on imported tuna suspected of being radioactive (following atomic blasts in the Pacific).

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1958
FDA publishes first list of nearly 200 Substances Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS).

1969
FDA begins administering sanitation programs for milk, shellfish, food service, and interstate travel facilities.

1973
Low-acid food processing regulations issued following botulism outbreaks from canned foods.

1980
Infant Formula Act establishes special FDA controls to ensure safety and proper nutritional content.

1990
Nutrition Labeling and Education Act requires all packaged foods to bear nutrition labeling and all health claims for foods to be consistent with terms defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

1993
FDA Food Code published as a model for state and local agencies that regulate foodservice, vending and retail food stores.

1994
Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act establishes specific labeling requirements and authorizes FDA to issue good manufacturing regulations for dietary supplements.

1995
Seafood HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) regulations to ensure the safe and sanitary processing of fish and fishery products, including imported seafood.

1998
Juice HACCP rule provides procedures for the safe and sanitary processing and importing of juice and requires warning label on unpasteurized juices.

2000
FDA requires that a safe handling statement for shell eggs be put on egg cartons.

2002
Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act provided new authority in areas including record keeping, registration of facilities, prior notice for imports, and administrative detention.

2006
Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act goes into effect requiring all ingredients derived from 8 allergenic foods be described on the label.

2009
Egg Safety (final) Rule issued – establishes requirements for control of Salmonella Enteritidis in eggs from production through distribution.

2010
Implementation of the Egg Safety Rule began in July 2010 for large (50,000 layers+) producers; smaller producers must be in compliance by 2012.

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