



United States Department of Agriculture

Food Safety and
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at the

FDA public meeting for Horizontal Approaches to
Food Standards of Identity Modernization

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Thank you, Dr. Mayne. Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here today to provide opening remarks and to participate in this public meeting on a very important subject. I am here from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service or FSIS to show support for the FDA's efforts to explore a horizontal approach to modernizing food standards. FSIS believes the information gleaned from today's meeting will be helpful to the segment of the industry that falls under our jurisdiction, which includes establishments that produce meat, poultry and egg products, and the public that consumes these products. As this audience likely knows, FSIS and the FDA share responsibility for ensuring that food labels are truthful and not misleading. To that end, food standards have been established to ensure that products sold under particular names have the characteristics expected by consumers. Food standards are typically established under the common and usual name of a food and may be defined by certain ingredients, both mandatory and optional, and sometimes the amount of each ingredient. FSIS has established approximately 80 meat and poultry product standards, including standards of identity for hamburger and hot dogs.

As the director of the Labeling Staff at FSIS, I have observed the many different ways such food labeling standards affect the food products the agency regulates. Industry has and continues to use innovations in technology to develop food products that are not only safe and wholesome but that are also appealing to the public that consumes them.

As many of you know, meat, poultry and egg product labels need to be approved prior to their use on products that are introduced into commerce. To accomplish this, FSIS operates a prior label approval system. Under this system, certain labels are submitted to FSIS for approval before use while other labels are generically approved. Generically approved labels are those that bear only mandatory labeling features (they do not contain special statements or claims) and comply with the agency's labeling regulations and/or the Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book. Generically approved labels do not need to be submitted to FSIS for prior approval. As you can imagine, this allows us to see a lot of labels. It also provides us with insight into how the meat and poultry industry is developing products using existing food standards - in the regulations and in the policy book.

As Dr. Mayne mentioned, in 2005, FSIS and FDA jointly proposed a rule entitled ["Food Standards: General Principles and Food Standards Modernization"](#) as a first step towards modernizing outdated food standards, FSIS and FDA collectively received 32 comments to that proposal. Since that time, FSIS has received numerous requests from industry to make changes to our food standard regulations and the Policy Book. As a result, on, November 7, 2013, FSIS announced that it would no longer add new entries to our Policy Book, but would continue to amend and remove items to this book, as necessary, while conveying new labeling policy through other means, such as industry guidelines. In the recent past, FSIS has amended its Policy Book to include revisions to the

standard for Chicken Cordon Bleu and the removal of entries for Smithfield Ham and Jambalaya. Most recently, FSIS announced its intention to propose labeling requirements, including a standard of identity, for cell cultured meat and poultry products through a public process, likely rulemaking. This process will be informed by the thousands of public comments already submitted to FSIS regarding the labeling of these products.

In closing, FSIS intends to continue working with FDA on these issues and we look forward to joining the conversations and learning more about horizontal standards. We are hopeful that the feedback received today will assist our respective agencies with developing strategies to address modernized food standards for the new and innovative products that are or will be coming to market.

Thank you.