

FDA Announces a New Cooperative Agreement Program to Advance Safety of Manufactured Human Food

Constituent Update

July 22, 2021

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is pleased to announce the award of a cooperative agreement for facilitating long-term improvements to the national food safety system by strengthening interagency collaboration, improving States' regulatory and surveillance protection programs, conducting research, and promoting the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS) to the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO).

The total funding for the cooperative agreement program is \$9 million over three years. The cooperative agreement directly supports the Agency's mandate to protect the nation's manufactured human food and animal food under FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Congress recognized that with more than 3,000 state, local, territorial, and tribal government agencies (SLTT) involved in food safety, the nation's food protection efforts must be fully integrated in FDA's work to fulfill FSMA's mandate that consumers are protected by a food safety system based on prevention and risk.

The cooperative agreement will help the FDA to leverage AFDO's strengths to assist SLTT manufactured food programs in their efforts to reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness risk factors, implement and attain conformance with the MFRPS, and fully leverage SLTT food programs strengths to advance the regulation of the manufactured food industry.

As part of the three-year cooperative agreement program, AFDO will work collaboratively with the FDA to achieve the following objectives:

- Support the efforts of Federal, State, and local government agencies to build a National Integrated Food Safety System.
- Establish systems for sharing, promoting, and collaboration of best practices, guidance document, sampling plans, procedures, memorandums of understanding, and other tools to foster mutual reliance between Federal, State and local manufactured regulatory programs and public health agencies.
- Assist FDA in the identification, development, delivery, promotion, and attendance of food safety and defense training programs to support conformance with the MFRPS, training and stakeholder support provision of FSMA.
- Support the advancement of the MFRPS and Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Alliance (Alliance).

According to AFDO Executive Director Steven Mandernach, "This cooperative agreement provides important resources to support programs and systems designed to help SLTT manufactured food programs as they work to enhance their regulatory programs and improve the consistency and quality of their work through conformance with the FDA's Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS). These foundational efforts are critical as we continue to work together to achieve a nationally integrated food safety system."

In addition, Erik Mettler, Assistant Commissioner for Partnerships and Operational Policy within the Office of Regulatory Affairs at FDA offered the following comments on the announcement of the new award, “Protection of the nation’s food supply is a responsibility that is shared across all levels of the government, which requires collaboration and mutual reliance. This cooperative agreement will not only support the collaborative efforts but will also assist SLTT food regulatory programs to improve their effectiveness. FDA looks forward to continuing the work with AFDO to achieve the goals of a national integrated food safety system.”

The burden associated with foodborne illness is considerable. According to surveillance data from the Centers for Disease Control, 1 out of 6 people each year in the United States — approximately 48 million people – suffers from foodborne illness, with more than one hundred thousand hospitalized every year, and 3,000 dying. FDA and AFDO are dedicated to the prevention and mitigation of foodborne illnesses, and the award of this cooperative agreement is another step towards achieving that effort.

For additional information, please email the Office of Partnerships in FDA’s Office of Regulatory Affairs at OP.Feedback@fda.hhs.gov.