



A National Integrated Food Safety System

The definition of, vision for, and guiding principles and key components of a National Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS) and the role of the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) in building an IFSS.

Vision and Mission for an IFSS

Mutual Reliance for a Safer Food Supply

Collaboration – Sharing Solutions – Solving Problems

Definition of an IFSS

A national Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS)¹ includes a seamless partnership and operation among Federal, State, and Local agencies (strategic partners) to achieve the public health goal of a safer food supply. An IFSS also actively solicits input and support from stakeholders.

The seamless operation of IFSS strategic partners will:

- Plan and prioritize work to coordinate resources;
- Implement and use data from foodborne illness and outbreak surveillance² for evidence-based food safety policies and programs, and evaluation of their effectiveness;
- Implement efficient, prevention-focused, risk-based inspections and sample collections;
- Share data among strategic partners; and
- Promote use of compliance and enforcement tools for achieving compliance with food safety laws and regulations.

¹ The PFP's vision for an IFSS is currently intended as an initiative within the United States. Where appropriate, the PFP principles and resource documents may be shared with foreign government partners to promote a global approach to food safety.

² For purposes of this document, surveillance can include information related to monitoring illness and food contamination, and data collected during inspections and investigations.

A national IFSS must:

- Be built upon mutual reliance and respect among strategic partners recognizing and understanding each partner's roles, strengths, limitations, and authorities;
- Leverage resources, talent, subject matter expertise, surveillance systems, and enforcement tools to achieve the best public health outcome;
- Facilitate the sharing of timely surveillance data between strategic partners for early foodborne outbreak detection, response, and post-response;
- Allow for rapid sharing of routine and confidential information between strategic partners while adhering to legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Ensure that strategic partners have food safety and industry oversight programs that are comparable relative to public health outcomes through the implementation of agreed upon program standards;
- Utilize a consistent and transparent approach to classify food and feed facilities according to risk;
- Include a risk-based, standardized joint work planning process embraced by all strategic partners for the assignment of inspections of food and feed firms, and the collection and analysis of food and feed samples;
- Facilitate ease in data capture and use by all strategic partners to develop and support the aforementioned national work plan;
- Utilize national training and certification programs to ensure that regulatory and public health activities are being completed to the same standards of proficiency and quality;
- Strategic partners work as a multidisciplinary team to conduct outbreak investigations to facilitate the prompt removal of unsafe products in order to minimize continued exposure;
- Embrace the use of clear, transparent, and measurable public health based metrics to evaluate program and system effectiveness, and monitor progress toward achieving IFSS goals and objectives;
- Seek and utilize the knowledge, data, experience, and processes of industry, academia, and consumer groups;
- Have food program leaders across strategic partners to take an active role in developing and supporting a national IFSS.

The Partnership for Food Protection (PFP) is a group of dedicated professionals from strategic partners with roles in protecting the food supply and public health. PFP is a primary contributor to the overall development and implementation of an IFSS, incorporating and coordinating input from those with expertise in human and animal food, epidemiology, laboratory, animal health, environment, and public health. The PFP is not a policy setting organization. The function of the PFP is to promote communication and integration between all jurisdictions and provide resources, risk-informed insight, and best practices to improve the system that partners can utilize to inform and enhance their work to protect public health.

The PFP has defined the following seven goals to advance a national IFSS over the next six years:

- A. Outreach: Communicate the benefits of an IFSS and the role and accomplishments of the PFP.
- B. Work planning and Inspections: Strategic partners use coordinated approaches for planning and conducting industry oversight activities such as work planning, inspections, and sampling to promote compliance with applicable food safety laws and regulations, and to protect public health.
- C. Compliance and Enforcement: Strategic partners use coordinated approaches for planning and conducting industry oversight and enforcement activities to promote compliance with applicable food safety laws and regulations and to protect public health.
- D. Surveillance, Response, and Post-Response: Strengthen and enable faster and more effective surveillance, response, and post response efforts through coordination among strategic partners.
- E. Laboratory Science: Promote consistency and facilitate information sharing through establishing and utilizing national laboratory best practices.
- F. Training and Certification: Provide input into the development of standard curricula and certification programs that will promote consistency and competency among the IFSS workforce.
- G. Information Technology: Promote data standards to improve the ability to share information electronically among strategic partners.

The PFP recognizes that factors such as work planning, communication, national standards, information technology, best practices, and metrics will need to be addressed within each of these goals. The PFP has developed a Strategic Plan that will advance the IFSS in these seven goal areas.